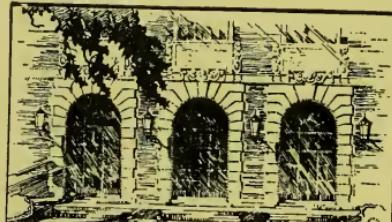


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THE WARHAWK

CHAPTER I.

In the last chapter of our first volume, we left her Majesty's cruizer the William and Mary lying to off the Head—the Old Head, as it is styled—of Kinsale, on which now stands a noble lighthouse, making the chances of shipwreck and disasters infinitely less than at the period of our story.

Leaving the cruizer for the present, we

request our readers to step with us on board the lugger, the Warhawk.

This vessel, for several years, had baffled every attempt either to take her or condemn her as a smuggler. The contraband trade in Anne's reign, and long after, was carried on, on the coast of Ireland, with an audacity and success unparalleled. The numerous and extraordinary coves and intricate channels having entrances blocked up by rocks and islands intersecting the entire coast of Ireland from the old Head of Kinsale to the Island of Valencia, afforded every facility for the running of cargoes, and for the concealment of the smugglers and even their vessels. The cruizers on the coast were very few: they appeared only at intervals, and were all dull sailers. The guard upon the coast was rarely diligent; and for miles upon miles, no watch at all was kept. From the Seven Heads to Bantry, the coast was thinly populated, and scarcely cul-

tivated ; the inhabitants eagerly joining in all smuggling transactions.

The Warhawk was decidedly the handsomest and fastest craft ever employed in the trade—she was built in a Spanish port, by Irish speculators—no expense was spared in her construction, or arming ; and her crew were picked men. These men and her commander, swore they would never surrender their cargo, as long as the Warhawk could keep above water.

As the Warhawk came within sight of the Kerry coast, on her voyage home (her destination being a well-known cove to the eastward of the old Head of Kinsale, and just round it's bluff and bold promontory) the crew caught sight of the Queen's cruizer.

The commander of the Warhawk, a tall, handsome man, about eight-and-twenty years old, brought his glass at once to bear upon the cutter. After a moment's steady regard, he turned to a stout, jovial-looking individual,

who was steering the lugger, and, with a laugh, said—

“There is a wolf that wants to be taken for a lamb.”

“What is she, captain?” asked the pilot.
“She looks a large-sized sloop.”

“She’s a revenue or Queen’s cruizer, and she’s shifting hertrysail and getting up her mainsail. She has made us out; and I fancy some information has been given of our coming, for she has been lying-to during the night, no doubt. She has the wind from the Nor-west—a squall that will soon be over. We shall carry this gale on with us, which will spoil her sport.”

“Musha, does he think his ould tub could keep company with the Warhawk?” asked the pilot.

“No,” replied the commander; “I am not thinking of that, Mahony; but you see, we must try and get rid of this cutter, which

seems to be a very fine craft, before night-fall. This gale will freshen from the shift of wind ; and, if I am not mistaken, we shall have a dense fog before night. See, how low and thick the seud comes in. Now, your plan, Mahony, will be to keep manœuvring the cutter, till we can make a run for the old Head, so as to hit the spot about night-fall. We will then push in for the Race, where the cruizer will never dare to follow, supposing she has legs to keep up with us ; then run through the gut, and there's an end of her."

"Let me alone, captain," said the pilot. "By jabers, I'll lead him a purty dance, and let him get within smell of us, just to keep him lively."

The reader has seen how the chase was managed, till the lugger, suddenly hoisting her main-lug, altered her course, and ran in amid the terrible, tumbling sea of the Race. As the vessel plunged amid the boiling surf, a flood of water burst over her low, flush deck,

which would certainly have made free with some of the crew, had they not been prepared for such a contingency. After rolling and plunging fearfully amid the breakers—every rope and sail strained to its utmost—the lugger ran through the very narrow channel between the Race and the old Head, where the water was comparatively smooth.

The two hardy seamen at the tiller, shook themselves with a reckless laugh, saying—

“Faix, boys, that was as good as a shower-bath, any day. Good bye to her Majesty’s barky; for, be me soul, for an ould tub she aint a bad one for speed. What a purty night she’ll have of it !”

“Have a care, Mahony, have a care,” said the Captain of the lugger. “You are threading a needle with a very ugly eye to it.”

“Oh, faix, never fear, sir,” rejoined the Pilot; “I’m wide awake. I’ll put you close enough to jump ashore, if needs be. I’m shaving the ould head as close as ever a barber

cropped a poll. They'll never follow us here. No, Devil a fear of them. The cutter would be in bits in half an hour if they attempted to cross the Race in this gale, and not knowing which way to steer when through. Lower the lug! Lower away, handsome!" shouted the pilot, as they rounded the head, and a tremendous squall over the top, bent the Warhawk, with her bulwarks under the flood. The lug was lowered and secured in a moment.

It was now dark; and what with the dense fog and violent squalls, the passage round the Head could only have been attempted by men as daring and reckless as those on board the Warhawk; for so very close did they run to the bluff Head that the dash of the wave against the rocks was thrown back upon their own decks. She was then carefully, and under very easy sail, worked into a deep indentation of the Coast, about seven or eight miles from the mouth of Kinsale Harbour.

This Cove was, at the period of our tale,

surrounded by land, wild and uncultivated, and with scarcely a habitation to be seen for miles, being separated by the Bandon river from the more cultivated and populous part of the county. Within this Cove the Warhawk let go her anchor in three fathom water, as still as a mill-pond, though the gusts over the land fell heavy and frequent, with a loud roar as they rushed through the rigging, and over the still water, and then died away in the distance.

As the lugger swung to her anchor, a bright crimson flame was burned for a short time over the bows of the vessel, and then it was extinguished, and all became wrapt in the profound darkness of the night, the rain, at the same time, descending in torrents. Scarcely five minutes elapsed, before a similar flame was seen by the anxious crew, not a hundred yards from them, on the sandy beach of the Cove.

“Come, by Jove, that’s hitting the time, and the place to a nicety,” said the Captain of

the Warhawk, rubbing his hands. "Now, lads, out with the boats. A couple of hours will do our business here, and I shall leave you, Mahony, in charge of the craft for the rest of the night. In the morning, you can run in for the Cove of Cork. Your papers are all right; and this cargo, consigned to Cooper and Briscoe, will be taken charge of there—so now let us be active."

The two large boats of the lugger, built purposely for discharging her contraband cargo, were soon floating alongside; and in an incredible short period were loaded to the very gunnel.

"What a lovely night it is!" ejaculated the pilot, to William Fenwick. "Glory be! it's a real jewel of a night."

"A *darlint* it is," returned a stout, hardy seaman, dropping his oar-blade in the water, preparing to pull.

These observations on the night clearly

proves to us that every one is not of the same mind with respect to the weather, as this "Jewel of a night," was intensely dark ; rain pelting down, and the gusts of wind were furious and dismally cold.

The shore was speedily reached. As soon as the sound of her boat's keel grated on the shingly beach, some ten or a dozen men rushed into the water to meet the smugglers.

"Musha then ; glory be ! Here you are ! Long life and more power to you. Faix, ye have had a fine time of it."

Then followed shaking of hands ; and many a joke and laugh ; though every individual present was soaked to the skin.

"Come, come, boys, no blarney," said the Captain. "Work is the word. Start that small keg, and pass the can round. Then let me see you all off like a pack of beagles."

"Aigh, aigh, sir, I'll start him," said a man with a lantern and a huge piece of iron, like a

crow-bar, driving, as he spoke, the head of the cask in. It was brandy ; and the can was passed round to the great delight of the men.

After this, the work went on swimmingly ; and, in a wonderfully short time, the boat's cargo was transferred to the backs of several horses, and some harnessed to a kind of cart without wheels.

Before two hours had passed, the place was quite deserted by boats, smugglers and assistants ; leaving only the commander and his particular attendant, Darby Mc'Grath, standing on the spot.

For a moment or two, William Fenwick stood listening ; but all was still, save the roar of the blast, and the thunder of the sea breaking on the rocks without the Cove.

“ All right, Darby,” said the captain, turning round to his man, who was squeezing the last drop from the keg. “ Now let us push on across the moor, for the old Tower of Kil-gobben. We have made a nice thing of it.”

“Be me conscience, you may say that, Mister William. There will be nice pickings for the owners of the Warhawk.”

“Well, push on, now the work’s done; this rain and cold wind is not pleasant. It will be daylight before we get to the creek. I wonder if the punt’s there; or did they forget, in the hurry, to leave her at this side?”

“Ould Bill is sure to have left her there, and the paddles,” returned Darby; leading the way across a most bleak and dismal track of land; and just as a dull, miserable, wet, November morning broke, they reached the edge of a small creek—the waters of which empty themselves into the Bandon river.

“Faix, here’s the punt, sure enough!” said Darby M’Grath; and then, from a great mass of tall rushes, he pulled out a pair of short oars.

William Fenwick jumped into the punt, while Darby cast off the chain, and, taking the oars, he pulled rapidly down the creek, and

into the broader waters of the river Bandon—which runs into the harbour of Kinsale, and thence reaches the sea about five miles below the town. It was strong flood tide. Pulling with the stream, they ran the boat ashore, under the old Tower of Kilgobben.

Within a hundred yards of the tower, there was then standing a two-story building. It had been a slated house; but the slates had gradually disappeared; and, as they vanished, they were replaced with any substitutes at hand, however unsuitable to the purpose the latter might have been. The windows, woefully deficient of glass, were patched with paper, old rags, and an old hat. These make-shifts served, in some degree, to keep out wind and rain, and also to exclude light. Both sides of the noble river were, at this period, woefully deficient in the slightest appearance of agricultural labour. Thinly, and widely-scattered, were the habitations of the peasantry; and, as to resident gentry, there was not one nearer than the im-

mediate vicinity of Bandon or Kinsale. There was an air of desolation and ruin—of poverty and neglect—around the house and ground.

As soon as the captain of the Warhawk, and his attendant, Darby, approached the house, the loud baying of fierce dogs was heard, and, instantly, two brutes, leaping over the low broken wall of the yard, flew at the intruders, as they supposed them ; but an oath and a kick, from Darby, drove them back. At the noise made by the dogs, a window was thrown open, and a head—ornamented with a remarkably dirty cap—was thrust forth, and a voice—not very remarkable for its dulcet properties—cried out—

“ Och, and by me conscience, I’m pleased to see you return, Darby, jewel ; and you, too, Mr. William.”

“ Don’t stand chattering there, ye omadaun, but come down and open the door,” said Darby, looking up to his better half. “ You have a

tongue as long as an eel, and, by Jabers, quite as slippery."

"Oh, ye're a beauty yourself, Darby dear," exclaimed the head; "but I'll open the door in a jiffy."

"Has my father returned, Peggy?" demanded William Fenwick, as the woman with the soiled cap, but very good-looking face, opened the door.

"Troth, he has, Mister William, these three days; and sure it's mighty anxious entirely he was to see you safe back from this voyage."

"Well, here I am, Peggy, safe and sound, at all events," returned the captain of the lugger, entering; "but is he in the house now?"

"He is; that is, he *was* an hour or two ago," said Peggy; "but he rode over to Inni-shannon, saying as how he would be back to-night or to-morrow, that's to-day, for it's yesterday he went away, now I think of it."

“Bother the woman,” said Darby; “her head was never the clearest.”

“Och, faith, it’s clear enough, Darby, jewel. The master said, if ye weren’t back without being caught, it would be a bad job: he could wait no longer.”

“Humph!” muttered William Fenwick, what’s in the wind now, I wonder?” So saying, he passed through a dilapidated passage, and unlocking a side-door, entered a room differing very widely from the others. This room led into another, a sleeping chamber. The sitting-room was comfortably furnished: it had a carpet, and a book-case, with many volumes on its shelves. On a table were scattered several charts, compasses, and pieces of music. A keyed flute and a violin hung, with a few marine pictures, against the papered walls. Altogether, there was a look of civilised life and comfort, irreconcileable with the exterior of the house.

"Now, Peggy," said William Fenwick, "stir yourself; "light a fire here, and get me some breakfast."

Then, entering the other room, he soon got rid of his soaked and rough seaman's attire. Divested of this, and dressed in a plain suit, such as was worn by gentlemen of easy circumstances, William Fenwick appeared an exceedingly handsome young man, having no trace whatever, in his fine and regular features, of the wild and reckless character of his present life.

On returning to the sitting-room, he found a good blazing fire, and preparations making for a substantial breakfast, which proved that Peggy had other active members besides her tongue.

William Fenwick had scarcely commenced his breakfast, before the sound of a horse's feet caused him to look out from the window, when he beheld his father ride up to the door,

aud give his horse to Darby. The next moment he entered the room, seemingly much heated and disturbed.

Throwing himself into a chair, and wiping his brow, he said—

“This is a lucky turn of Fortune’s wheel, William. By Heavens ! I was afraid The Warhawk would have been taken, and your person secured.”

“Ha ! How is that, father ?” exclaimed the son, filling a cup of chocolate, and pushing it over to his sire. “How could you have known we were chased ?”

“The devil !” exclaimed the elder Fenwick, raising his huge eyebrows ; “then you *were* chased ? I was only imagining you *might* be. Well, you are a favourite of that capricious jade, William.”

“But you have some news, I see,” rejoined the young man ; “for yon look agitated, father. Is he dead ?” And he looked his

father anxiously in the face. "If he is," added he, "my worthy cousin steps into a princely fortune."

"If you had not your father to work for you, William, such might be the case," replied the elder Fenwick; "but you have guessed rightly. The Baronet *is* dead. Your cousin, however, will not succeed to the estates."

"The devil he won't!" rejoined the young man, a little astounded. "How is that?"

"Ah, that will be explained hereafter," answered the elder Fenwick; "at present our object is to get out of this country as privately, and, mind you, as rapidly as possible. Why you seem alarmed."

"All's right, father; The Warhawk's papers are not to be questioned."

"Yes, yes," impatiently interrupted Mr. Fenwick; "it's no question about The Warhawk now; but, let me tell you, if we linger here twelve hours longer, we shall be found

board and lodging in Cork jail. I'm not joking. You called my projects mad ones ; and yet they have fully and completely succeeded."

"Very good," said the son, coolly sipping his chocolate ; "but touching that lodging in Cork jail. What has led to such a comfortable perspective, since The Warhawk has nothing to do with it ? She cannot be caught with a contraband cargo, for that was landed and stowed away before daylight."

"Nevertheless," said the father, "there are two English officers of the Government now in Cork ; and before night they will be here to apprehend us—or, rather *me*—as a political offender. They have had accurate information, and a faithful description of our persons ; but our real names are safe. The name of Fenwick we must drop from this hour. I have also had information that officers are sent to different ports, and that a Queen's cruiser is on the coast—the same, I suppose, which you escaped

from. Now, then, attend to my projects. We must destroy all documents we have here that might give a clue to those who will assuredly search after us. Even Darby and his wife must be left in total ignorance of our final departure; they must imagine we are only going to Bandon, and will return as usual. I have arranged with Greene concerning our shares in the Warhawk."

"Nay, father," interrupted the son, "in every thing else, I am willing to follow your plans and projects. But my half of The Warhawk, I will not resign. I will give up the command for a time, till we see how your scheme prosters. It will then be time enough to decide."

The elder Fenwick thought for a moment with a somewhat uneasy expression of countenance; but then, looking up more cheerfully, he said—

"Be it so. Of us and of our future proceedings, they can know nothing. Your wish

in this matter can, therefore, be gratified without hazard. You will soon find how useless it will be to incur even a remote risk. Once across the Channel and landed on the English coast, we may defy discovery."

For two hours after this conversation, father and son were actively employed in destroying letters, papers, &c. Even books were consigned to the flames.

Satisfied even if the strictest investigation was made by the most cunning searchers, that nothing would be discovered against them, the father and son changed their attire; and, telling Darby and his wife to keep a sharp look-out in case any hunt should be made after the cargo landed the preceding night, said they were going to Innishannon; and, mounting the two horses kept in the establishment, left the place.

Taking a road across the country, well known to the elder Fenwick, they reached Timoleague. Here Mr. Fenwick procured a

man to take the horses on to a farm, held by a person with whom he had been connected for years. Finally, they procured a passage across from Glandore to Milford Haven, in a Welch sloop, and thence proceeded to London, where we leave them for the present.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT three months after the departure of the Fenwicks from the tower of Kilgobben, Mr. Briefless, the lawyer, was sitting in rather a melancholy mood, and immersed in thought. He had not recovered the shock inflicted on him by the sudden demise of his old friend, Sir Hugh Granville ; added to which astounding misfortune was the unexpected event that followed ; for no will, or copy of a will, could be found. The lawyer's

thoughts were in a sad state of perplexity : he became absent in mind, and restless.

Mrs. Silvertongue, his housekeeper, was as miserable as her master ; not, indeed, so much on account of Sir Hugh's death, as that her master's strange manner alarmed her. To her, he appeared going into a decline : his chocolate and toast were scarcely touched in the morning, and her neat dinners met with the same indifference.

Mr. Briefless passed half the mornings pacing his library, muttering all kinds of strange sentences. The few words she caught at times frightened her. “ There's villainy at work !” That expression disturbed her mind. Altogether, master and housekeeper were sadly out of sorts.

On the morning already alluded to, the lawyer had proceeded earlier than usual to his library, and soon began turning over several bundles of deeds and letters, anxiously

looking for one particular document ; for which purpose it was necessary to read part of the greater number. In the midst of this unpaid occupation, Thomas, his factotum, entered the room with letters.

“ Ha, here it is at last !” exclaimed the lawyer, selecting an epistle with a foreign post-mark. “ What a dilatory mode of correspondence ! Three months before I can get an answer to my letter ! Very good, indeed !”

He then opened the letter which, as he well knew, was from Sir Gerald Granville. He read the contents slowly and attentively ; read it again ; folded it up, and placed it carefully aside, muttering to himself—“ By Jove, the boy’s mad, that’s clear ! Prefers being shot at by a parcel of fools, who pocket six-pence a-day and eat bad food for committing wholesale murder, to returning home, enjoying a princely fortune, and doing good to his fellow creatures. What the devil has *he* to do

with the Dutch? Humph! They are the only gainers by this *war*. He'll get tired of it, though, or get shot.

“No, God forbid!” exclaimed the little lawyer aloud, and jumping to his feet, as a very smart double knock was heard at the street door.

Thomas shortly entered saying—

“There is a Mr. Greathead below, sir, who wishes particularly to see you if not engaged.”

“Greathead!” repeated the lawyer; “nobody in these parts of that name. Shew him up, Thomas—shew him up. Greathead!—curious name. I wonder if he has a big head. These names always take their rise from—”

He had no time to finish his sentence, for Thomas ushered the stranger into the library.

Mr. Briefless, after a rapid glance over the stranger's person, which was far from pleasing, bowed, and requested him to be seated, saying—

“Mr. Greathead, I presume.”

The stranger bowed profoundly, and smiled. The smile made the lawyer start. He rubbed his hand, as if cold, and sat down.

Mr. Briefless was a short man, but nearly as broad as he was long. Now the stranger was rather shorter, and so very thin, that, as the worthy lawyer afterwards declared, he felt satisfied if he stood between him and the light, he could have seen through him. There was nothing very remarkable in his head, except that, contrary to the fashion of the period, he wore neither wig nor powder, but his grizzled, short hair curled like a poodle dog's. The peculiar expression of the stranger's mouth was attributable to the excessive thinness of his lips ; so that when he smiled the effect was as if a livid streak had been drawn across the face from ear to ear. He was, however, well-dressed in the very ugly mode of Queen Anne's reign.

“Very fine morning, Mr. Briefless,” began the stranger, seating himself.

The lawyer cast a glance at the window, saw it was a raw bleak day in March, and replied—

“Very.”

“I have waited on you, Mr. Briefless,” said Mr. Greathead, “on what will, I fear, appear to you, unpleasant business. But, first, allow me to say—I am a lawyer—and reside in London.”

“Indeed! humph!” muttered Mr. Briefless, eyeing his brother in the law, and feeling rather disconcerted, as he observed the singular contortions of the stranger’s enormous mouth. “You say it’s unpleasant business—very good: still it’s business. Pray what may it be?”

“True, true,” returned Mr. Greathead, twisting one leg over the other, and smoothing down that part of the leg where a calf is sometimes found, but of which there was not the

smallest outward sign—under the tight silk stocking, worn by the London Lawyer. “I wait on you, Mr. Briefless, on the part of Sir William Granville O’Grady.”

Mr. Briefless started from his chair, while the stranger’s mouth underwent a most singular change, one corner turning straight up towards the left eye.

“Sir William Granville O’Grady!” echoed Mr. Briefless. “I know no such person—never did—there is no such person.”

The stranger smiled a ghastly smile, which made our Irish lawyer shudder.

“Don’t be too hasty, Mr. Briefless,” rejoined the stranger. “I told you my business would be unpleasant. Still, as you say, it *is* business.”

“Curse you and your business, and your hideous mouth too,” inwardly ejaculated Mr. Briefless.

“Tax your memory,” pursued Mr. Greathead; “and you will find that you formerly

knew, or at least heard of, a Mr. William O'Grady, who, about nine-and-twenty years ago, married the eldest—eldest mind you—daughter of the late Sir Vrance Granville—of Granville Castle, Ireland."

"Why, the man was drowned, and the truly unfortunate lady that fled her father's roof with him, met the same fate," retorted Mr. Briefless.

"Ha, very good indeed," rejoined the stranger, "I thought, my dear sir, your memory was too good to lead you astray. The gentleman to whom you now allude, is the father of my client, Sir William Granville O'Grady. Mr. O'Grady, I am most happy to inform you, did not perish at sea, as was supposed. Being a soldier—perhaps you are not aware that he was an officer in the Spanish service—he adopted what he styled a *ruse-de-guerre*, that is, his servant, who had a young wife, embarked, attired like his master, in the Mary of Dunmore—which craft, as you are

aware, was wrecked on the Salter's, and every soul perished. Captain O'Grady, on the other hand, proceeded to Wexford, where he was married by a Catholic Priest, sailed for Carnarvon in Wales, and *there* Mr. Briefless," and the London lawyer looked unutterable things, "and *there*, was married by a clergyman of the same persuasion as his wife. One child, a son, my present client, was born, and his birth most unfortunately caused the death of his mother."

Mr. Briefless sat like one turned to stone. He did not doubt the truth of what Mr. Greathead stated, because he felt that no impostor would be likely to attempt so daring and impossible a fraud. Besides, running rapidly over in his mind, the events of years back, he remembered that a terrible watch had been kept upon the Granville family. But what he thought, he kept to himself, and after a long and painful pause, said—

"That I should be astonished, Mr. Greathead, you will not wonder. That a person

supposed dead for nine-and-twenty years, should suddenly make his appearance, and produce his son as the heir to a noble inheritance, appears most strange and mysterious."

"And yet, Mr. Briefless," replied the London lawyer, speaking gently and with a soothing tone, "when explained, it will all appear extremely simple and natural. Pursued by Sir Vrance Granville and his son, with unrelenting animosity—"

"You are wrong, sir," interrupted Mr. Briefless; "the late lamented Baronet followed them in company with his father to save and intercede for a beloved sister, not to persecute or molest, as you insinuate."

"I ask your pardon, Mr. Briefless," returned the London lawyer; "my client knew not that. He knew he was pursued; but he could not know with what feelings on the part of Sir Hugh. He was, nevertheless, thoroughly aware of the fierce hatred entertained towards him by his bride's father. The death of Mrs.

O'Grady, which took place in Jersey, where his son was born, put an end for ever of hoping for a reconciliation. We have no business to inquire how Captain O'Grady passed the nine-and-twenty years, he was supposed dead, without fortune or even remote kindred. I believe he lived during that period entirely abroad."

As the London lawyer spoke, his piercing eyes rested with a searching expression on the face of his companion. Mr. Briefless, was, however, summoning all his energies to meet the crisis that was coming; and he bore the gaze of his brother-lawyer unshrinkingly.

"Now, Mr. Briefless," continued Mr. Greathead, "my client, Sir William Granville O'Grady—for, of course, the title goes, at all events, to the child of the eldest sister—my client, I say, claims the entire Granville estates and property, amounting, including Castle Granville and Innismoyle, to, I believe, fourteen thousand a year. A noble property, Mr.

Briefless, a noble property. Besides this, the late Sir Hugh Granville purchased for twenty-three thousand pounds, the estate of Deer Hurst, in Oxfordshire, worth, let us suppose, one thousand a year. Sir Hugh also possessed, in India bonds and other securities, over eighty thousand pounds. Now, with the funds arising from these, my client, Sir William, thought he had nothing to do, as it was Sir Hugh's own personal property, and, of course, he willed it to his favorite nephew, Mr. Gerald Granville. Having, however, heard a report that no will could be found after the strictest search, my client puts in his claim for the whole property ; and it will hardly be denied that he is perfectly justified in doing so."

A short silence ensued. Mr. Briefless would admit nothing.

"Am I right," at length resumed the London lawyer, "in saying that no will, or other document exists to frustrate my client's claims ? As the late Sir Hugh's confidential

friend and law-adviser, and the holder of all the papers, documents, deeds, &c., of the Granville family, I, of course, as in law bound, apply to you."

Mr. Briefless, for several moments, was plunged in deep and most painful thought. To the Granville property, there could be no doubt that, supposing all the proper documents were brought forward, the son of the eldest daughter of Sir Vrance Granville was unquestionably heir-at-law. Still, Mr. Briefless determined, in his own mind, that every kind of opposition should be thrown in the way of Sir William's succeeding to the personal possessions of the late Sir Hugh. Eighty thousand pounds once spent—supposing the existence of fraud, as the lawyer suspected, in the disappearance of Sir Hugh's will—would be eighty thousand pounds gone for ever. They might enjoy the Granville estates; but then they were safe. They could not spend more than the actual rental; nor could they encumber the entail.

After letting these thoughts run through his brain, Mr. Briefless cautiously replied—

“What you have urged, Mr. Greathead, may be strictly true. I have nothing now to say; except that it is very extraordinary, and very mysterious. There is one thing, however, which the law will decide, (of course every species of document and proof will be demanded); for I tell you candidly—” Here our little friend was forced to close his eyes, for a moment, the mouth of Mr. Greathead performing such a series of contortions as actually to confound him. “I tell you, candidly,” at length, resumed Mr. Briefless, “that I will oppose your client step by step; and maintain, till forced to surrender, that my client, Sir Gerald Granville—for such he is till proved to the contrary—is the real and undoubted heir of the late Sir Hugh Granville. I drew up his will myself, sir,” continued Mr. Briefless, getting a little excited. “The late Sir Hugh loved his nephew as a son; he knew of no other nephew existing; he could have had

no motive whatever, in destroying his will. I saw my lamented friend two days before his death ; and we were on such terms of friendship that I feel perfectly satisfied had the Baronet only meditated destroying his will, he would have mentioned it."

"Very likely—very likely, indeed," replied Mr. Greathead. "Still there is no accounting for the changes of the human mind. Was there not a secretary of Sir Hugh's? Might not he know something of the Baronet's affairs of which you were not cognizant? Are you sure of his honesty?"

"Sir," replied the little lawyer, "Mr. Gardener is a man of strict integrity : he is even more astonished than I am : he has lost a very handsome annuity ; that is, if your client proves his case ; for though the document may be destroyed, or *made away with*—" and Mr. Briefless pronounced the last words with an emphasis—"yet, the annuity which I knew was left to Mr. Gardener, will be made good."

“Very generous indeed,” returned Mr. Greathead. “Still I should be sorry that Sir Gerald Granville, besides being deprived of the noble property he was always led to imagine would be his, should, out of his small means, be induced to fulfil the supposed wishes of the late Sir Hugh. And I feel satisfied that Mr. William Granville O’Grady—should his case prove successful—will make it a point to carry out his uncle’s wishes with respect to legacies, &c., to domestics, and those whose long services merited a token of remembrance. I will detain you no longer, Mr. Briefless; we shall meet hereafter, when supporting our respective clients. I have done what my client considered it my duty to do, in waiting upon you—I now take my leave. All the necessary documents, certificates of birth, marriage, &c., shall be forthcoming at the proper time. I wish you a very good morning.”

Having thus expressed himself, the mouth of Mr. Greathead presented the most singular

appearance it had yet assumed : the under-lip lapped over the upper till it touched the nose ; and then, suddenly changing, the enormous mouth became no larger than a child's when whistling.

“ God bless my soul !” muttered Mr. Briefless, as he started back. But mastering his emotion, he rang a small silver bell, standing on the table, and then wished Mr. Greathead good morning.

Thomas showed the London lawyer out, and then the door closed, leaving our little friend in a perfect state of bewilderment, quite unconscious of Mrs. Silvertongue's entrance into the room. His thoughts were in the clouds — his eyes were fixed on his housekeeper, who, with one of her best smiles, was opening her mouth to ask some question, when Mr. Briefless exclaimed, lifting up his hands —

“ What a feature ! never saw so monstrous a mouth !”

Mrs. Silvertongue started, turned pale, and

involuntarily drew her rather large mouth into so very small a compass, that Mr. Briefless, whose thoughts were coming round, exclaimed—

“Good gracious, Mrs. Silvertongue, how you startled me! I thought that cursed man with the mouth was come back again! Never, my dear Mrs. S——, never draw your mouth into that frightful resemblance again.”

“Frightful resemblance!” cried Mrs. Silvertongue, echoing her master’s words, and putting her neatly trimmed apron to her eyes, “I never thought, sir, I should live to hear you say I was a frightful resemblance.”

“By the Lord Harry!” exclaimed the lawyer, staring at his house-keeper, “you’re mad, my good woman.”

“Good woman!” sobbed the housekeeper, “after fifteen years faithful—”

Mr. Briefless saw he had committed some sad mistake. How he managed to rectify his error, we cannot say; but Mrs. Silvertongue

left the room with a smile on her face, saying to herself—

“ Well ! indeed he is a dear little man, that he is.”

Mr. Briefless spent the four following days arranging various papers and documents, so as to be ready for the important trial that was to take place on the first of the ensuing month.

On the day when judgment was to be delivered, both Captain O’Grady and son were present. It was with intense interest that Mr. Briefless gazed at his formidable opponents. Captain O’Grady was at this time in his fifty-sixth year, of a tall and portly stature. He had evidently been a remarkably handsome man ; was richly and fashionably attired, and wore an immense peruke ; but his face was entirely destitute of beard, being closely and carefully divested of that appendage. The son was even taller than the father : he wore his hair without powder ; so profuse were his whiskers and mustachios that scarcely a parti-

cle of his face was visible except his very dark and brilliant eyes. He was attired in a rich Spanish uniform, and bore altogether a manly and distinguished appearance and demeanour.

Captain O'Grady was closely attended by the lawyer with the formidable mouth. The authenticity of the documents produced by Captain O'Grady, could not be denied. He distinctly proved his own identity, his two marriage certificates, certificates of birth, his wife's death, and the surgeon's certificate of the birth of his son. So clear, indeed, was the documentary evidence, that Mr. Briefless and the other lawyers employed on his side, made no efforts to put it aside. Mr. Harmer, the late Sir Hugh's domestic chaplain, was also present, and watched with keen anxiety the manner and appearance of William Granville O'Grady. Notwithstanding the lapse of years—despite the change from boyhood to manhood—the addition of whiskers and mustachios, Mr. Harmer was firmly of opinion that, in William Gran-

ville O'Grady, he beheld the boy attempted to be passed upon Sir Hugh as his nephew, Cuthbert Fitzmaurice.

Still this knowledge was of no manner of use. Even if proved, it could not upset his claims to the title and property of the Baronet.

Mr. Briefless and his brother lawyers admitted they were satisfied as to the proofs brought before them ; and therefore Captain O'Grady's son was duly acknowledged to be the heir to the Granville estates and title. But with respect to the estate purchased by the Baronet in Oxfordshire, and the eighty thousand pounds in India bonds and other Indian securities, Mr. Briefless had a document to prove that the late Sir Hugh Granville's nephew, Gerald Granville, was the real and undoubted heir to that estate and money.

The speech of Mr. Briefless in support of this claim caused a considerable sensation in Court. Captain O'Grady started to his feet, while his

face, before flushed, became pale. Sir William's dark eyes flashed, as they fixed themselves upon the face of the little lawyer; while the mouth of Mr. Greathead actually astonished the whole Court by its strange contortions.

The little lawyer, nevertheless, stood his ground firmly: he looked Captain O'Grady full in the face, and paid no attention to the fierce frown of the son; but he carefully avoided his brother lawyer with the formidable feature. Taking from a green bag a folded parchment, he opened it, and read to the silent and attentive Court, a deed of gift of the estate of Deer Hurst, in Oxfordshire, and the entire sum of eighty thousand pounds, invested in Indian securities. Then followed the late Sir Hugh's reasons for making this gift during his life. In the deed, he stated that a wish, during his life, to render his nephew totally independent of him, arose from a strange feeling that had oppressed him for years, owing to an

impostor having been palmed upon him as his nephew, Cuthbert Fitzmaurice. A feeling of insecurity, with respect to the Granville property, hung over his mind, haunted by a presentiment that notwithstanding having made his will entirely in favour of his nephew, Gerald, he had resolved on this deed of gift, which was to be presented to his nephew immediately on his return from Flanders. This deed, executed during a short visit he made to Castle Granville about twelve months before his death, was drawn by Mr. Briefless, and witnessed by two gentlemen of the city of Cork, then in court, and ready to swear to their signatures, and to the validity of the deed which had been read to them. Mr. Briefless stated that he had misplaced this deed, and, for three months, had been baffled in his search for it. But, strange to say, he had found it on a shelf in his own library four days ago.

A profound silence reigned through the

Court as the lawyer made this statement, and then handed up the deed to his Lordship, the presiding Judge.

“There can be no question concerning this document,” said the Judge. “Where are the two gentlemen whose names are attached to the instrument?”

“They are here, my Lord,” said Mr. Briefless, motioning the two witnesses to come forward.

Mr. Hull and Mr. M‘Grath, two merchants of high respectability and fortune of the city of Cork, were then sworn. On being questioned with respect to the deed, their answers proved they were perfectly acquainted with the contents of the document. They, moreover, attested their signatures.

“This is a very simple, straightforward document, gentlemen,” said the Judge, addressing the lawyers acting on the part of Sir William Granville O’Grady. “Have you any thing to say against its validity?”

Captain O'Grady had, for the last few minutes, been eagerly conversing with his lawyers. When the Judge spoke, they became silent, and then their leading counsel said—

“Nothing whatever, my Lord.”

CHAPTER III.

DURING the events recorded in our last chapters, Gerald Granville pursued his military career with ardour and distinction. At the famous battle of Blenheim, Prince Eugene was thrice repulsed in a fierce attack upon the enemy, when the dragoons, under the command of our hero, came rapidly over the field, and, joining the Prince, again made a furious charge upon the enemy, and swept them from their position. This was the last charge for the day; for that

formidable position being carried, the enemy gave way on every side.

In the midst of victory, whilst riding by the side of the Prince, who was warmly returning him thanks for his splendid and most masterly charge, a random shot struck Gerald Granville from his horse.

“Not seriously wounded, I trust in God !” said the Prince eagerly, as O’Regan and two of the attendants of his Highness threw themselves from their horses, while another rode off for the Prince’s own surgeon.

“God forbid we should lose so good a soldier ! No nobler spirit rode the field this day,” added Prince Eugene, as they bore our insensible hero to his tent.

“I trust his wound is not mortal, your Highness,” returned General Vandermere; “for we owe the success of this last charge to his judicious and able assistance.”

Colonel Granville’s wound, though severe, was fortunately not dangerous. Through the

skilful treatment of the Prince's surgeon, in three weeks he was able to leave his couch. He was then residing in Hochstadt, the Duke of Marlborough having returned to England.

Rejoicing in his master's recovery, O'Regan presented him some letters that had been forwarded from England, after much delay on the way. His faithful attendant allowed him to be sufficiently recovered before giving the letters, fearing they might agitate him. Gerald was perfectly astounded at their contents. One was from his excellent friend, Mr. Harmer; the others from Mr. Briefless. They gave a full account of all that had occurred—tidings so fatal to his interest. The whole affair was so singularly mysterious, that it plunged him into a maze of conjecture and painful thought. Mr. Harmer stated in his letter that it was his solemn conviction that in Sir William O'Grady he beheld the very boy who formerly was passed upon Sir Hugh as his nephew, Cuthbert Fitzmaurice. He felt assured that some deep

villany had for years been at work, and that his uncle's will had been made away with in some mysterious way, which Providence would yet bring to light. Mr. Harmer added that he had been present at the trial. He had expected to see Mr. Gardener in court on that occasion ; but learned he was in a very depressed state of mind ever since Sir Hugh's death, and was then suffering from a severe attack of paralysis. Much kind advice, and other matters were in the letter ; and Gerald for a time remained buried in the memory of the past.

At length, resolved not to torture his mind with a mystery he could not expect to unravel, he sat down to write and communicate his wishes to Mr. Briefless. He begged the worthy lawyer to make good every legacy intended by his generous uncle to be paid to his servants, and other faithful dependents ; also the annuity to Mr. Gardaner ; to send Mrs. O'Regan (a most kind and worthy woman) and her family over

to Deer Hurst as housekeeper, and to retain all the servants in that establishment on the same footing. He also informed Mr. Briefless that he had hopes of regaining his paternal property of Glendore Abbey. The Duke of Marlborough had promised to exert his great influence with the Queen to have the attainters against the Fitzmaurice estates reversed.

As to O'Regan, when informed of the sudden appearance of Sir William O'Grady, and his having claimed and gained the estate of Granville Castle, Innismoyle, &c., his astonishment and rage knew no bounds. His indignation was so great, that he classed the worthy lawyer, Mr. Briefless, as one of the impostors who had robbed his master of his just right.

"Don't talk to me of law," fiercely exclaimed O'Regan to his fellow-servant, the Colonel's head groom. "Curse the law! There's no law. Oh, I know the right sort of law. By my soul, if his honour, Sir Hugh, had only let me lay my fist upon that rapparee and impostor,

Master Phelim O'Toole, as the lying villain called himself, I'd a settled the law of the case, then ; faix, I'd a beat him to a jelly, and had the truth out of him afterwards. The black hearted rascal ! he thought to take my life, too. Wait a bit—God send we return to old Ireland !”

For several days, O'Regan was in a perfect fever : it was nothing to him that his master had wealth enough. O'Regan cared as little for mere money as the Colonel. The thing that choked him was that an impostor should take the title and the old family mansion of Castle Granville, and Innismoyle Abbey.

Gerald soon regained strength ; and the Duke having given him permission to serve under Prince Eugene, at the prince's particular request, he set out at once to join His Highness.

At this time, all Savoy was conquered by the French. Susa, Pignerol, and other fortresses of Piedmont, were reduced by their arms ; and, in the end, the Duke of Vendome laid siege to

Victor Amadeus himself, in his own capital. This was the great crisis of the Italian war. During this contest, the colonel again signalized himself. When the king contrived to escape from Turin, Gerald, with a party of cavalry, saved the monarch from being re-taken by the enemy; for which service he was personally thanked by the king, invested with the order of ——, and created a Count.

Prince Eugene, having received great reinforcements from Germany, advanced upon Turin. The French army was totally defeated, and finally forced to evacuate Italy.

Prince Eugene loaded the colonel with orders and encomiums; wished to attach him to himself, and offered him the rank of a general officer. But Gerald had a strong wish to return to England; and, feeling his old wound a little troublesome, he resolved to take up his quarters in Turin, for the ensuing Winter, and return to England in the Spring.

Having passed the latter part of the Summer

in Switzerland, he proceeded towards the end of September to Turin. The termination of the war, had restored peace to unhappy Italy; and, in a short time after, her cities were again the centre of attraction to numerous visitors from all parts of Europe. At Turin, he found, at a banker's, the funds he had requested Mr. Briefless to lodge there, and, also, some letters. The worthy lawyer stated that Sir William Granville O'Grady continued to reside in London—an agent being appointed over the Irish estates, to the great disgust and rage of the tenantry, who never ceased lamenting the change of owners.

Gerald Granville rapidly recovered health, and his usual strength; and, one day, was greatly surprised when he heard the name of the Honorable Mrs. Atherstone mentioned as one of the English residents in Turin. Although five years—passed in the excitement and turmoil of war—had elapsed since he had seen the Atherstones, the colonel had by no means

forgotten the young and beautiful somnambulist. He had often, in the solitude of his tent, when wearied and exhausted, allowed his mind to dwell on past scenes ; and, amid the many images that floated through his brain, that of the fair and lovely girl would often present itself to his imagination.

Our hero allowed his mind but seldom to dwell on the singular event that had deprived him of a title and a home he loved so well—for the scenes around Castle Granville were dear to his memory ; but he thought, at times, of the strange mystery that enveloped the fate of his elder brother, and the murder of his grandfather. He often thought it possible that Cuthbert Fitzmaurice might yet be alive ; and that some strange and unlooked for circumstance, might bring to light the mystery now so involved in darkness.

The murder of Gerald's grandfather, and the abduction of Cuthbert Fitzmaurice, took place

at a period of unparalleled crime and outrage in Ireland, when all law was set at defiance. On the restoration, to that unhappy land, of a kind of tranquillity, it was utterly impossible to gain the slightest clue to the perpetrators of the iniquitous act of violence inflicted on the Granville family.

Individual sufferings being insignificant in comparison with the great political stake then at issue, the most abandoned ruffians were let loose on society, without any fear of punishment—or even of detection.

After some few moments of thought, Gerald resolved to renew his acquaintance with Mrs. Atherstone and her daughter. An unaccountable desire again to behold Aleen, took possession of his mind. Accordingly, the next day—after a little more attention to his toilet than usual—Colonel Granville, having enquired where they resided, proceeded towards their residence.

Turin is as well known at the present day to

our countrymen, as any provincial town in their own little island—to many, perhaps, a great deal better. It is certainly, in our mind, one of, if not the handsomest built cities in Italy. The houses are stately and handsome, and the streets regular—perhaps too much so. Be that as it may, its situation is beautiful; and the country surrounding it, picturesque and lovely.

The colonel pursued his way leisurely. Here and there he could see traces of the siege it had so lately undergone by the Duke de Vendome. At length, he reached a very handsome mansion, whose windows looked forth over the valley of the Po. Though the middle of October, the weather was extremely mild and beautiful—in fact, more like the early part of September.

On sending up his name, which Colonel Granville was particular in doing, he was conducted through a very handsome suite of rooms into a spacious saloon. For a few

minutes he remained alone, but was soon roused from his thoughts by the entrance of Mrs. Atherstone, who advanced, holding out her hand with a manner and smile exceedingly cordial and friendly, though the next moment her expressive countenance, as Gerald thought, looked troubled; and he remarked that she was pale, and thinner than when last they met.

“ This is, indeed, a most unexpected pleasure, Colonel Granville,” said Mrs. Atherstone, her fine eyes resting upon the much changed, but stately figure of the young Colonel.

Kissing the fair hand held out to him, Gerald led the lady to a seat, saying—

“ To me, dear lady, this meeting is most fortunate. Several years have passed, and not one face have I seen during that time, familiar to me, or which could recal one pleasurable hour in my own dear land. I trust your fair daughter enjoys good health.”

Mrs. Atherstone replied that Aleen was

then entirely recovered from an internal injury she had received in a fall from a horse. It was on her account they came abroad, to spend the winter in Italy; she expected the return of Aleen every moment, who had gone out for a drive with a Mrs. Dalton, a great friend of hers, whose husband was attached to the British embassy in Florence. "But allow me, Colonel Granville," added she, "to congratulate you on your brilliant military career. Both Aleen and myself felt sincere pleasure on hearing of your gallantry and rapid promotion; and also much grieved when we learned that you had been severely wounded at the famous battle of Blenheim."

"My dear madam," returned Gerald, gratified by the kind manner of Mrs. Atherstone, "you must not consider my promotion over many who equally deserved distinction, as gained by my own merit. I am what may fairly be termed a favorite with Fortune.—I joined, highly introduced to his Grace the

Duke's notice ; chance circumstances threw the ball at my foot ; and a singularly fortunate assistance I was enabled to give Prince Eugene, at a critical moment, obtained me my present rank ; whereas, had my brave Colonel not been shot down at the commencement of the battle, the chance would have been his."

" Fortune favors the brave, Colonel," said Mrs. Atherstone, smiling.

At that moment, the noise of carriage wheels, and a loud ringing at the great portal, caused the lady to pause. Gerald thought she turned somewhat paler. It might be fancy. She rose, however, saying—

" That is Mrs. Dalton and Aleen. I will just mention to Aleen your being here, that she may not be too suddenly surprised. Excuse me, one moment."

Why did Gerald Granville's heart beat quicker at the thought of seeing Aleen Atherstone ? She was but a child—a mere artless girl—when last they met.

In a very few moments the sound of a light, hasty step fell upon his ear in the adjoining apartment; and the next instant Aleen Atherstone, followed by her mother, entered the room. Gerald started from his chair to greet the dear girl, who, with all the warm feelings of her heart and country, and the memory of times past fresh upon her recollection, hurried forward to accost one she had never forgotten in her young heart.

But what a vision of surpassing loveliness met Gerald's gaze, as with flushed cheek and sparkling eyes, she held forth—not one fair and fairy hand—but two, saying in a voice, that was music to the ear—

“ And is it possible, Colonel Granville, that we have met again, and so very, very unexpectedly.”

The color came in a rich glow over cheek and temple, as Gerald kissed—we are afraid rather warmly—the beautiful hands he-

held ; and as the sweet girl's looks rested upon the dark brilliant eyes of the Colonel, there could be no mistaking the glance of intense admiration which Gerald cast upon the fair somnambulist. She, too, seemed struck with the great change that had taken place in the Colonel, whose always striking and graceful form was now fully matured. His handsome features and complexion—naturally dark—were embrowned by service and exposure to all weathers. His own hair, which he wore despite the fashion of the times, was left to its natural inclination, not twisted and tortured into the hideous mode of the British court. Altogether, Colonel Gronville was of a noble and distinguished appearance ; and Aleen, in her heart of hearts, thought so.

Before Gerald could respond to the sweet girl's welcome, a stifled sigh startled him and Aleen.

“ Dearest mother !” exclaimed the maiden turning rapidly round, are you not well ?

You—" she hesitated ; her own colour went and came, and then she added, as her mother took her hand and kissed her brow—" you over-exerted yourself last night, dearest mother. The rooms were very hot—you do not look well."

" You mistake, dear child," returned the mother, forcing—Gerald saw it *was* forced—a gay smile. " I sighed quite unknown to myself. Some passing thought, perhaps. But here is our friend Mrs. Dalton."

Gerald was now introduced to that lady ; and the party, seating themselves, the conversation became general.

" You were at the siege of this city, were you not Colonel Granville ?" asked Mrs. Dalton. " This very morning, I heard the Marchese de Cerego, mention your name. He was speaking in terms of high praise of an English officer, in Prince Eugene's famous regiment, who had been of signal service to their King, Victor Amadeus. I requested the name of the

English officer, and he gave me yours. How singular that I should, in a few hours after, have the pleasure of meeting you—and finding that you are an old friend of Mrs. Athertonstone!"

"I remember the Marchese Cerego very well," returned Gerald; "he was an officer in the cavalry regiment, which escorted the King in his escape from this city. His Majesty was graciously pleased to confer upon me the title of Count, and the cross of a distinguished order of Knighthood. So you see, my dear madame, when once Dame Fortune adopts one as her favorite, there is no end of her smiles. Though, perhaps," and he spoke in a tone somewhat changed, for Aleen, who was attentively listening, turned her lustrous eyes upon his face, "perhaps Fortune's wheel may, for the future, be reversed."

"No, no, Colonel," said Mrs. Dalton, in a gay tone, and with a very meaning smile, as her eyes, for an instant, rested upon Aleen,

"no ; you will carry the smile of the fickle goddess with you, to the end. You will find me a true prophetess. What say you, Aleen, my love ?"

"Oh, Colonel Granville knows he has my good wishes," replied Aleen ; "but these horrid wars are all over now," added she, turning to Gerald ; "and you have won laurels enough. So do not try fortune any more with the sword, Colonel."

"Very good indeed, Aleen," returned the sprightly Mrs. Dalton. "Do you challenge the Colonel, to enter into the service of another goddess, even more fickle and dangerous ?"

Aleen's cheeks vied with the rose—Mrs. Atherston laughed, saying—

"You had a proof of Aleen's powers as a prophetess, Mary, at Domo D'Ossola, where we all were nearly drowned in the Lake. She insisted, Colonel, that it was one of the finest days in the world, and promised us a delightful excursion over the Lago Maggiore ;

instead of which, we were drenched to the skin, and nearly upset by a furious squall."

"After all, mother," retorted Aleen, laughing, "a prophet is only a prophet in his own country."

"By-the-bye," said Mrs. Dalton, "your excursion on the Lake, puts me in mind, Aleen, of our party, to-morrow, to the Superga. Of all others, you, Colonel, must be of the company; so, mind now, I expect you to join us. I will take no excuse; for I am the proposer and inviter to this long-projected excursion."

"You need be under no apprehension, Mrs. Dalton, of refusals—where you are the inviter," said the Colonel; "but I am curious to know why I, of all others, should visit this stately temple, the Superga."

"Because," replied Mrs. Dalton, "the King you so happily succoured at the critical moment, has caused a most magnificent painting to be placed in the Superga—to fulfil a

vow, made at the time, to commemorate that event and the siege of his capital."

After some further conversation on divers subjects, Gerald took his leave, promising to be punctual the next morning.

"The weather looks so lovely, that we are sure to have a delightful day," said Aleen, to the Colonel, in parting. "We shall have a talk over old times."

"Prophesying again, Aleen," interposed her mother. "Remember the Lago Maggiore."

Gerald left his friends, more than ever fascinated with Mrs. Atherstone's daughter; and from that hour he vowed that if Aleen refused his love, no other should ever gain it.

CHAPTER IV.

As our hero sat in his solitary saloon—for as yet he neither visited or received visits—his mind dwelt entirely upon his late interview with Mrs. Atherstone and her lovely daughter. He was satisfied and dissatisfied with the reception he had met. Not dissatisfied with respect to the real feelings of esteem the mother and daughter entertained for him. He did not doubt that the pleasure, sparkling in the eyes of Aleen, as she held out her hands to him, was genuine and heart-felt. There could

not be any deception in her. No, Aleen was the same artless, open-hearted maiden. Time, though it had rendered her superlatively lovely, had not changed her nature nor her feelings. It was in the manner of Mrs. Atherstone, that Gerald saw a change. He did not, for a moment, wrong Aleen's mother by supposing his loss of rank and fourteen thousand a-year influenced her sentiments towards him ; but he felt there was something unpleasant ; a mystery ; a cloud of some kind, hovering between Aleen and himself, that would yet throw a dark shadow over their path.

Gerald passed an uneasy night ; he slept little ; but he thought much. Aleen Atherstone was, henceforward, to be to him, the touchstone of his future felicity.

After the departure of the Colonel, Mrs. Dalton turned to her friend, saying—

“ I never saw a more distinguished-looking person than this new-found friend of yours. Do tell me where you first met, and what is the

cause of this sadness of manner. It's no use, Matilda, your hiding a secret from me. I will never rest till I find it out." And the gay Mrs. Dalton shook her head, and its clustering ringlets—for she, too, preferred the Italian mode to the costume of her own country.

"It's not fair to tax me with having a secret, Mary," returned Mrs. Atherstone, smiling, "because I happened to feel a kind of oppression. I'm not joking, indeed; but all this morning I felt an unaccountable depression of spirits. But you were asking me where I first met Colonel Granville. Aleen, there, could better tell you the origin of the acquaintance."

"I will do so, my dear madam," said Aleen; "and I think you will say that the intimacy between the gallant Colonel and myself commenced in rather a novel mode; namely, at a road-side inn, on our way from Oxford to London—in the middle of the night—and when I was scarcely fourteen years old. At this inn,

I was walking in my sleep—a habit, thank goodness, I have abandoned since I arrived at years of discretion. I fear I shall shock you," continued the beautiful girl, with a smile on her lip, and a slight flush on her cheek, when I confess to you that I walked right into the Colonel's chamber, he was then, of course, a very young man, and was, I suppose, fast asleep. However, I walked out again; and it seems he must have awoke and followed me. I next got out on a balcony, and popped right into the arms of no less a person than the terrible Dick Turpin, the highwayman, who, with two or three other robbers intended, after plundering Mamma's trunks and boxes, to rob the house. You may well imagine that this rude *rencontre* broke my dream; and I awoke with a terrible scream, which roused the whole house; but not before Mr. Granville knocked the robber over the balcony, and caught me in his arms. One of the other robbers fired his pistol at Mr.

Granville, and slightly wounded him; and then, getting alarmed, decamped. Now, dear lady, that was the way we commenced our acquaintance. Was it not quite out of the common? You smile. Now do you not think I should make a capital story-teller?"

"No, not by any means, Aleen," said Mrs. Dalton, laughing. "However, it was very fortunate you were such a child."

"Very, indeed," responded Aleen seriously; "for otherwise I should be so very much older now. But you seem to doubt my abilities in story-telling, to which I am rather partial. I like hearing and telling a story; so now let me know why you pronounce me to be only an indifferent story-teller."

"For the simplest of all reasons," replied Mrs. Dalton; "you have jumbled together your sleep-walking propensities, road-side inns, robbers, and young men knocking down and shooting people in the head. Now, to be

properly understood, each part requires a separate grouping."

Aleen laughed merrily, for she saw her mother smile; and, besides, the fair girl was thinking of the excursion on the morrow, and of the gallant colonel who was to join it. Oh! thrice happy youth, that can enjoy the present, without poisoning it with thoughts of the future!

An equerry from the Prince de Carignano, requesting a visit from Colonel Granville, detained our hero the morning of the party to the Superga. However, as O'Regan held his horses in readiness to mount the moment he left the palace, Gerald overtook the heavy carriages containing the party before they had proceeded a league from Turin. There were several gentlemen on horseback, and a few ladies also. Gerald Granville's noble figure and splendid English horses, immediately attracted the attention of all, but especially of the fair ones of the party.

After shaking hands with the Marchese Cerego, and one or two other Piedmontese officers, with whom he was slightly acquainted, Gerald rode up alongside the immense, lumbering Berlin, that contained, not only the Honorable Mrs. Atherstone and Mrs. Dalton, but also the Marchesa Cerego and three young and very handsome girls. A shade passed over the countenance of the colonel as his glance roamed over the fair contents of the Berlin, and rested not on Aleen.

“Ah, you are a sad defaulter, Colonel Granville,” said Mrs. Dalton, after a rapid introduction to the rest of the occupiers of the carriage —your promises——”

“Fair lady,” interrupted Gerald, “spare me till you first hear me. His Highness, Prince Carignano, sent for me this morning; but I despatched my servant with my excuses for being late.”

“Ah, well, I acknowledge to having received your message,” responded Mrs. Atherstone.

We have enlisted you to attend *us*, instead of being one of the boating party, as Aleen intended you should."

"Boating party!" exclaimed Gerald, turning his head, and looking with surprise at the swollen and muddy waters of the Po, along whose banks they were proceeding. "Surely, Mrs. Atherstone, you were not tempted to let Miss Atherstone proceed by the river, at this period of the year?"

"You need not be alarmed, my dear madam," said the Marchesa de Cerego, seeing Mrs. Atherstone turn towards the river with a very anxious look. "The Marchese de Gavoni is a skilful pilot for our river; and his boatmen are noted for their attention and care. The river is certainly rapid; but the barge they are in is a very beautiful vessel, and the row down the stream is magnificent."

"So Aleen was told," returned Mrs. Atherstone, "and she is so partial to water excurs-

sions that she persuaded me to let her join the Marchese's party."

Just then a turn in the road brought them close alongside the river; and Gerald, as he looked upon the discoloured waters, and their very rapid flow, thought, in his own mind, that Aleen had better have remained with her mother. The mother thought so, too; and looked keenly up the stream for the gay barge of the Marchese.

An English cavalier of the name of Lake now rode up, saying the barge was coming rapidly down. They had reached the halting place; and the carriages drew up at a kind of quay or small mole by the bank of the river, which, about that point was divided by a long, narrow Island; and the stream ran violently between the Island and the bank. From the Island, extended several strong poles, which swayed to and fro with the violence of the current. Sometimes appearing above

water, but more often hidden by the force of the stream.

Gerald Granville had dismounted, and given his horse to the groom; several of the other gentlemen did the same. They all approached the landing place to await the arrival of the barge, which they could plainly see descending the river, with its gay streamers, and the gorgeous flag of its owner flaunting over the stern. It had a gay party on board, and the six oarsmen wore a bright orange livery, which shone flamingly in the unchecked rays of a mid-day sun. On she came, the Colonel's eyes steadily fixed upon the group of ladies in the stern. There was no awning or canopy, for the sun, at that period of the year, was more agreeable than otherwise.

As the barge approached, she took a sweep towards the Island, intending, no doubt, to round up alongside the Mole—with her head to the stream; but this, with the powerful current, required skill and room. The Colonel,

perceiving their object, said to the Marchese Cerego :

“It would be a better manœuvre to drop her along-side as she came down the stream.”

As the Colonel spoke, the rowers at one side, ceased their exertions, while the others pulled her round intending to sweep up to the side of the quay. At that moment, the barge drove on some sunken poles, and heeled violently on one side. Instant terror seized upon some of the females on board ; the barge swayed fearfully over, and several persons were thrown, by the shock, into the stream.

Screams, both from those in the boat, and those in the carriages, on shore, filled the air. But the accident had scarcely occurred before the Colonel was in the water, divested of his Riding-coat and boots. He saw three persons —one a female—borne down the stream, and rushing along the bank with the speed of thought.

Being a bold, and very powerful swimmer,

he soon approached the female who was kept up by her garments, aided by a singular presence of mind. When he threw himself into the water, Gerald knew not who the female was ; enough for him that a human being was in peril of life. But as he stretched forth his hand to grasp the figure before him, the face of his beloved Aleen met his gaze. She was not insensible ; her eyes, for an instant, rested on his, as she whirled round with the violent eddies, and her hands were stretched forth. The next instant, his arm was round her waist, and her head rested on his shoulder —for, to the vigorous soldier, her weight was as nothing. Did Aleen think, in that moment of peril, for she was quite sensible ? Yes, the sweet girl *did* think, and—. But why reveal the secret of a young, warm, and affectionate heart ?

Striking across the stream, Gerald landed on a small island.

Aleen, as he raised her from the water, and

pressed her to his heart, murmured some words which fell upon the ear of Gerald, like the sweetest of music. As he bore her up the bank, he beheld, to his surprise, O'Regan land, dragging with him the insensible form of a man. Dennis shook himself, muttering, aloud—

“By my soul and conscience, I’m afraid I’ve saved the life of a dead man !”

And then he commenced shaking the unfortunate sufferer.

Gerald had hardly seated Aleen on the bank, and rested her head upon his breast, and put aside the beautiful tresses of rich hair that fell disordered over her person, when, for a second, the soft eyes of the maiden met his, and she said, in a low murmur—

“The faintness is going off now, Gerald. My poor mother ! Let us be seen from the bank.”

“Here is the barge, sir,” shouted O'Regan, from a little distance. “By the powers, sir,

I've shaken a little life—thanks be—into him. It's not lucky saving a dead man!" he muttered to himself, as he propped his patient up against the bank; when, seeing him open his eyes, he added—"Musha, thank God, ye're not dead yet! How are you?"

"*Grazie mille grazie, signor!*" replied the half-drowned Italian, putting his hand out to his deliverer.

O'Regan rubbed his head, saying—

"Not half as good a language as Irish—can't make out a word of it."

At that moment, the barge touched the bank, and Mrs. Atherstone, assisted by the Marchese Cerego, landed. The next moment the daughter was in the arms of her mother—who spoke not, but clasped her child, all dripping as she was, to her heart. She held out her hand to Gerald Granville. No words were spoken; but the eyes of Mrs. Atherstone expressed all the mother's soul and heart.

Thus ended this long-projected party of pleasure—beginning in smiles, but too often, alas ! like many others, ending in tears ; for, unfortunately, an English gentleman, of the name of Herbert, perished. His death threw a gloom, for a time, over the English residents in Turin.

Dry garments, for Aleen, were procured at a mansion near at hand ; and then the party returned to Turin.

After seeing Mrs. Atherstone and Aleen to their home, Gerald returned to his own rooms in a very thoughtful mood. Having changed his soaked garments, he threw himself on a couch, to ponder over the event which had just occurred—an event which was henceforth to throw either sunshine or shadow over his path. A feeling of intense delight, notwithstanding the doubtful future, pervaded his mind ; and then he reproached himself bitterly, for so selfish and cruel a thought. Why should he

feel delight at knowing that Aleen loved him? If there were insurmountable obstacles to their union, why should he rejoice?

Gerald learned in the evening that Aleen was still suffering from the effects of the accident on the river. A slight fever had supervened; and the mother watched anxiously at her daughter's bed-side. The next day, however, the signs of fever had passed off; her medical attendant declaring that in two or three days she would be as well as ever.

This intelligence was no sooner communicated to him, than Gerald received a note from Mrs. Atherstone, requesting to see him at an early hour the next day. The colonel held the paper containing those few words, fixing his eyes upon the writing; but his thoughts were not wholly absorbed by the contents of the note. At length, he was startled from his reverie by accidentally raising his eyes to a large mirror opposite; when, to his great surprise, he beheld reflected the figure of a man, in a

monk's dress, standing behind him. Turning round, in some astonishment, he faced his strange and silent visitor. Before he had time to speak, the monk, with a slight inclination of his head, said—

“ Pardon my intrusion, Colonel Granville Fitzmaurice,”—laying a strong emphasis on the word, Fitzmaurice, and speaking English with the accent and tone of an Englishman—“ Your servant wished to announce me, but I prevented him. Your door was open; and so lost in thought were you, that my entrance was unnoticed.”

Gerald felt considerable surprise at hearing a perfect stranger address him by his father's name. Wondering what could be the motive of the stranger's intrusion, he said—

“ May I beg to know to what I owe the favour of this visit?” pointing, at the same time, to a chair.

The monk bowed, and sat down; and, as he did so, threw back his cowl, revealing a very

remarkable countenance. He was taller even than the colonel ; and though, perhaps, full eight-and-fifty years of age, still perfectly erect and majestic. This had struck the colonel before he sat down ; and now his features attracted as much attention as his remarkable figure. In early life, the stranger must have been singularly handsome ; though, when his gaze rested upon the colonel's face, there was an expression of sadness—if not sternness—in his visage.

“I have taken this liberty,” began the monk, “of calling upon you, colonel, from a desire either of promoting your future felicity, or preventing you from plunging others, as well as yourself, into much unhappiness—if not misery.”

While the monk spoke, the colour went and came into the cheek of Gerald Granville.

“You speak in riddles, monk,” said the colonel ; “I may partly guess what you allude to ; but, for my soul, I cannot imagine what

you, of all others, know either of my feelings or my future intentions."

"More," calmly returned the monk, "than you are aware of. I have no wish, colonel, to deal in mysteries. I would even now speak openly and plainly; but am restrained by circumstances. However, I will explain, in part, my meaning. Yesterday, you saved the life of Aleen Atherstone—you were of service to her before, when a mere girl. Now, it is quite impossible to have served Aleen Atherstone twice in the manner you have, and not feel for her more than friendship. The plain fact is, you love her as your own soul." And the dark, piercing eyes of the monk seemed to read Gerald's dearest thoughts. "You are silent, Colonel Fitzmaurice."

"I am so, Monk," returned Gerald; and he spoke somewhat excitedly. "I allow no man, even covered with the garment you wear, either to scan my thoughts, or control my in-

clinations. By what right do you intrude your presence and your observations on me?"

"Because," still calmly spoke the friar, "I am Aleen's father."

Gerald Granville felt as if struck down by some heavy blow. The blood forsook his cheek, while his eyes were riveted upon those of the monk, with a look of intense anxiety.

"Aleen's father!" ejaculated he; "merciful Heaven, how is this?"

A loud laughing, heard on the stairs, startled the monk. Dropping the cowl over his face, he said, in a low voice—

"Remember my words, Gerald Fitzmaurice. We shall meet again."

And the monk passed through the door, as the Marchese de Cerego and the Count del Sparto, the equerry of Prince Carignano, entered the saloon.

"*Corpo di Bacco!*" exclaimed the Count del Sparto, as he turned and looked after the

monk, “what a majestic figure ! Who the deuce is he, Colonel ? Not a petitioner for alms surely ?”

“And certainly not your father-confessor, colonel,” added the Marchese de Cerego, laughing, “as you do not profess the same faith.”

“I really never saw the monk before,” replied Gerald, shaking off the feeling that was crushing him, and endeavouring to speak cheerfully. “He is a marvellously tall, well-built man ; but you frightened him away. He said he would call on me again.”

“He never can be a messenger of Cupid,” observed the Count ; “though, by the mass, the cowl is often used to disguise worse purposes. Perhaps, he was no monk after all. However, Colonel, the Prince wishes you to attend to-night at the palace.”

“His Highness heard of our calamitous excursion,” observed the Marchese de Cerego, “and has expressed great regret at the fate of the unfortunate Mr. Herbert. He sent, also,

his compliments, and his own physician to Madame Atherstone, and congratulated her on the safety of her daughter. If you remain long here, Colonel, we shall be eclipsed in the eyes of our fair dames."

"I shall be happy to attend to his Highness's wishes," said Gerald, his thoughts being anywhere but with his guests, who shortly after departed, leaving him chagrined, mystified, and miserable.

CHAPTER V.

GERALD GRANVILLE's reflections were not pleasing, as he took his way the following morning to the mansion of the Honorable Mrs. Atherstone, bewildered by the discovery of Aleen's father and Mrs. Atherstone's husband in the garments of a monk, and distracted by thinking of the insurmountable difficulties that appeared to be rapidly increasing to prevent a union between Aleen and himself. He was accordingly ushered into the saloon

in a complete state of abstraction, from which he was roused by the soft, kind tones of Mrs. Atherstone's voice, as she entered the room, and held forth her hand, with a sad, but sweet smile, saying—

“To the preserver of her who is dearer to me than life, I need not apologize for my apparently cold leave-taking the other day. Though my manner may have appeared strange to you, Colonel Granville, I trust, short as has been our acquaintance, you will do my heart justice, and give it credit for deep and everlasting gratitude for my child's life.”

“Dear madam, you truly have surmised my thoughts and feelings,” replied Gerald, as he seated himself by the side of the somewhat agitated lady. “But how is Aleen? I need not, dear lady, tell you what my feelings and thoughts are with respect to her.”

A sad sigh followed the question of our hero, as Mrs. Atherstone replied—

“She is quite recovered, as far as health is

concerned, Colonel; and will, if you oblige us with your company, see you this evening. But I requested the favor of a visit from you to-day, for a particular reason—I must occupy your attention, Colonel," she added, with a faint smile; "may I say for one or two hours?"

"Dear madam, be it as you wish. Time, to me, is nothing. I only dread—alas! I know not what! But it is better to know the worst, than torture the mind with images that may not exist."

There was a momentary pause. At length, Mrs. Atherstone broke the silence by saying—

"Yesterday, Colonel Granville, you were visited by Aleen's father."

She paused—while Gerald replied—

"Yes, madam; and, I suppose, your husband."

"No, Colonel Granville," replied Mrs. Atherstone. "Not so. Aleen's father, and my only brother, Prince Ulick O'Connor."

“Good Heavens !” exclaimed our hero, with a start of profound astonishment, and an expression of deep regret on his handsome features. “Aleen not your child ! Alas !” he added, with a suppressed sigh, “I see now, in a manner, the mystery of the past. And has Aleen known this from her childhood ?”

“No, Colonel. To me, from her earliest age, she has been as the fondest of children ; and, if possible, I have felt for her more than a mother’s love. Till yesterday, she knew not that she was O’Connor’s daughter. Ah, would to God Aleen *was* my child ! The proudest wish of my heart would be gratified in her union with you.”

Gerald kissed the hand that pressed his with all a mother’s affection ; and then, after a moment’s thought, Mrs. Atherstone, in a clear, sweet voice, gave, to her deeply-interested auditor, the following history of the past scenes in her life.

“My father, Ulick Fergus O’Connor, before

the destruction of the Irish Princes, was acknowledged Sovereign Prince of Kerry, and owned a vast tract of country, and many splendid domains, all of which he lost by invasion and usurpation, except his estates in the vicinity of Bantry, including his beautiful castle of the lakes at Glengariff and Bear Island in the Bay of Bantry. Alas ! my dear Colonel, not only was the Prince deprived of his rank, but a great part of his confiscated property was bestowed upon Sir Vrance Granville, a favorite officer of Cromwell, who already possessed considerable estates in Ireland, won by his ancestor in the wars of Elizabeth. Your ancestor, also, Gormon O'Moore Fitzmaurice fought likewise against the Usurper, Cromwell, but finally yielded to his terms. Your father, of the same faith as his sires before him, lost his life supporting the claims of that miserably weak monarch, James ; and the Fitzmaurice estates also became confiscated. Thus, to a certain extent,

our families are equal sufferers from adherence to a hopeless cause.

“O’Connor of the West, as he was styled, after dropping the title of Prince, retired, when the hollow peace was established, to his Castle of the Lakes, though, by order of Cromwell, its fortifications and defences had been demolished. He had just married the daughter of the O’Kelly—a very lovely and amiable woman. The first year of his marriage, my brother Ulick was born; and not for ten years after did I see the light; but, alas, before I reached my fourth year, I lost that which is never to be recovered, a fond and doting mother.

“I must not dwell on my early life, but pass on to my beloved father’s death, which took place as Ulick attained his twenty-second year. You have seen him now, Colonel, in his fifty-fourth year, for he is no more, and can partly judge what his appearance was in youth. In fact, in person and features, Ulick

O'Connor was faultless. But, from his earliest years, he was of a fierce and ungovernable temper, always serious and thoughtful when not roused into passion, and for ever brooding over the injuries inflicted on his country, and the wrongs suffered by our race. The father confessor of the family, a distant kinsman of the O'Kellys, was, unfortunately, a stern, gloomy, and bigoted man. At this period, I was myself a Catholic; and the first shock my faith received, was from this intolerable priest.

Immediately after my beloved father's death, Ulick at once had the Castle of the Lakes put into a perfect state of defence, notwithstanding the rigour of the laws against such an act; but the country was then much disturbed. I know not how it was, but from my earliest childhood, I endeavoured to gain the love of my brother Ulick. Whether in his heart he returned my affection, I cannot say to this hour; but he certainly never showed me any. After my

father's death, I was confided to the care of a good and most amiable lady—a very distant relative, who was driven by misfortune to seek the asylum my brother offered her. This lady was in secret a Protestant. To gain a home and a protector, she kept her faith within her own heart, and outwardly professed to follow the religion of those with whom she lived. She is long since dead. Peace to her ashes ! Concealment of her faith was her only error ; for a most affectionate, fond protectress she was to me for eleven years. To her I no doubt owe my first thoughts upon the difference of creed ; and these thoughts prompted a desire for further investigation.

“ At this time, Ulick O'Connor was always styled prince by his numerous followers and dependents—for he inherited a very large fortune from his father, besides jewels and trinkets, of immense value. Then my mother was an only child, and an heiress to great wealth. I was about seventeen years of age, when I went

on a visit to the O'Kellys of B——. There I first became acquainted with the Honorable William Terence Atherstone, a gentleman of English extraction; but one branch of his noble family had settled in Ireland from the time of Elizabeth. His brother, Lord Atherstone, possessed large estates, and resided entirely in England. He was married, but had no family. The Honorable William Atherstone was at this period, in his twenty-fourth year—handsome, highly accomplished, and wealthy; for he inherited his Irish estates from his mother.

“Not to weary you, Colonel, we became attached, with but little hopes of my brother's consent to our union; for Mr. Atherstone, like all his family, was a Protestant. Nevertheless, in an interview with my brother, he stated his attachment and his proposals; and, to my infinite joy and surprise, Ulick gave his consent. At the expiration of the year, we were married, and I went to reside with my

husband at his beautiful estate and mansion, Atherstone Hall, in the County of Kerry, near the town of Kenmare. Four years passed in uninterrupted happiness: the fifth, after an illness that nearly cost me my life, I gave birth to a little girl."

Mrs. Atherstone sighed heavily at this point of her narration.

"The poor babe," resumed she, "lived but a few hours. Most unfortunately my husband was in England; and though he hastened his return the moment he heard of my illness, yet violent gales and contrary winds detained him, so that when he succeeded in crossing the Channel, and in reaching home, his child was no more, and I so dangerously ill as to be unconscious of his presence, and of all that had occurred. My brother Ulick remained in the house till I was pronounced out of danger, and then left Atherstone Hall. I slowly recovered.

"Alas! a few short months, and I was destined to receive a greater and deeper wound

than the loss of my infant. My beloved husband was killed by a fall from his horse. How I bore such terrible misfortunes it is needless to say. The recalling them even now causes much anguish ; but I feel it necessary, though in a brief manner, to state every event as it occurred. During the passage of these few years, great and signal changes came over the land of my birth. The hopes of the Catholic party revived with the accession of James to the throne of Great Britain. Factions, headed by men of rank and influence, were rapidly rising all over the country. In truth, fatal times were coming. Life and property were no longer safe ; and bands of miscreants roamed unchecked through the country, committing frightful acts. Fearful of remaining in the lonely situation of Atherstone Hall, though near the town of Kenmare, I took up my residence in the Castle of the Lakes, at my brother's request, though I felt a wish to proceed to England.

"I had not been there a week, before I bitterly repented accepting Ulick's invitation. I found my brother more gloomy and bigoted than ever. His expressions against the English settlers in Ireland were fierce and revengeful; and he vowed, in his moments of passion, that he would never rest till they were annihilated, or driven from their unjustly-held possessions. The Castle of the Lakes was now a very strongly fortified place, and contained a large number of armed retainers.

"Though I kept almost entirely to my own apartments, with my old nurse and two female attendants, who were strongly attached to me, yet I sometimes came across the residents and visitors to the castle. One person I particularly remarked: he was a tall, strong man, with very handsome features, though their expression was, at times, extremely disagreeable, if not startling. His dark and piercing eyes made me shudder, I could

scarcely say why ; for I came but seldom in his way. I understood he was called Fenwick, but this, no doubt, was an assumed name. I remained quite ignorant of the events, the terrible events, that had taken place after the landing of King James ; and my brother's mad schemes he also kept concealed from me.

“ At length, to my astonishment, I became acquainted with events that had occurred before my marriage. It seems that your father and Ulick O'Connor had often met, previously to your father's marriage. They both espoused the same cause, and both were high-spirited and remarkably handsome men. Mr. Gerald Fitzmaurice was the only chief, amongst those that joined O'Connor, who positively refused to have anything to do with the plot, having for its object the extermination of the English settlers in Ireland. This refusal led to a little coldness between them ; but, strange freak of destiny, Ulick O'Connor beheld your beautiful and accomplished mother, while on a visit at Donerail

Castle. Peculiarly alive, notwithstanding his gloomy disposition, to female loveliness, he became passionately enamoured of Emmeline Granville, notwithstanding the difference of creed, and her being the offspring of the hated Saxon blood. But the daughter of Sir Vrance Granville did not return Ulick's passion; for she was already attached to your noble father, Gerald Fitzmaurice, and in six months from that time became his bride.

"Your father must have been united to Emmeline Granville just about the period I gave my hand to the Honourable Mr. Atherstone. My old nurse, the person who informed me of these events, said that Ulick's rage and passion, when he heard of your mother's marriage, was terrible. The wound rankled to his heart's core, and she declares he vowed a deadly and lasting hatred to all the race of Fitzmaurice."

Mrs. Atherstone paused; for she saw, by the changing expression of Colonel Granville's

features, how much he was pained by this part of her narrative. She readily imagined what was passing in his mind. She had inquired minutely into the history of Gerald's family some time after their first acquaintance commenced; and seeing him alternately pale and red with emotion, she immediately surmised the cause, and at once hastened to undeceive him.

“I perceive, my dear friend,” she continued, “the impression my words make on your mind in reference to the past. But of this be assured—and I pledge you my sacred word—Ulick O'Connor, with all his faults and errors, and his fiery passions, was incapable of an outrage so horrible and so bloodthirsty, as that which bereaved you at the same moment of a mother, a grandfather, and a brother.”

“Thank God for that!” ejaculated Gerald, fervently.

“You will see,” continued Mrs. Atherstone, “before I close my narrative, why I so confi-

dently make this assertion. The perpetrator of that crime and outrage was most likely the man I mentioned to you of the name of Fenwick. Mark, I am not positive. My surmise is wholly based upon the hearing of events that you yourself will now be able to judge of likewise. It was only last night that I received permission to speak of these things to you—I will now continue."

Perfectly perplexed, and feverish with excitement, Gerald listened breathlessly.

"Things were beginning," resumed Mrs. Atherstone, "to wear a very sinister aspect in the Castle of Glengarriff, or, as it was usually styled, the Castle of the Lakes. You are not, perhaps, aware of the wildly romantic situation of O'Connor's Castle. Seated on a thickly wooded eminence, some hundred feet above the placid Lakes of Glengarriff, the Castle commanded—for, alas, it exists no longer—the most varied and beautiful prospect, extending over the fine bay of Bantry, and Bear Island,

where my brother in his youth—had a hunting tower. The hill on which the Castle stood, was washed at the base by the waters of the bay and its sides, to within a few hundred yards of the summit, were richly covered with wood. Beneath, were the Lakes, with their hundred isles clothed to the very water's edge, with evergreens and dwarf oak, Such was the Castle of the Lakes in point of situation. The building itself was a magnificent one for extent and strength.

“I determined, if possible, to remove from the Castle. Bands of fierce and desperate characters filled the halls of my ancestors with riot and unbridled license. Scarcely a mile distant from Glengariff was a very retired, but comfortable cottage, into which I removed with my old nurse, then relapsing into second childhood, two female attendants, and the old gardener. There I determined to remain till I should have an opportunity of requesting my brother to conduct me to Waterford, whence I

might embark for England. But Ulick remained absent ; and, finally, the adherents of James, after that monarch had fled, were hunted through the Island like wild beasts. I soon learned that on account of some daring deeds committed by a band led by Ulick and Fenwick, O'Connor was proclaimed an outlaw, and that a price was offered for his capture. A strong force was sent against him : he was forced, after a fierce conflict, to fly ; and then a detachment, under a skilful officer, was sent to dismantle, and take possession of, the Castle of the Lakes. This force, Fenwick contrived to entrap, amid the defiles of the mountains leading to Glengariff. Not a man escaped. This so exasperated the Government, that they resolved to burn the residence of the O'Connors to the ground, and disperse, or exterminate his dependants.

“ I tell you these things, Colonel, in as brief a manner as possible, and hurry to that part most interesting, though distressing, to you.

“I said the Government were determined to destroy Glengariff Castle ; and as the approaches through the mountains were difficult and dangerous, the troops proceeded from Bantry in boats, and landed at the foot of Glengariff. I well remember that dreadful night. An awful storm of thunder, with tremendous rain, and furious gusts of wind, came on after sunset. At the cottage, which stood upon level ground, near the only road leading from the glen into the country, we knew not of the landing of the troops, nor of their intention of surprising Glengariff ; but we had not retired to rest ; for we were all terrified by the terrific peals of thunder, and the howling of the blast, as it raged round the frail cottage. My nurse and two attendants were sitting pale as death, close to each other ; while, as I sat listening, I fancied I heard strange sounds besides those of the storm. At length, in a pause of the hurricane, we heard the peal of musketry. Suddenly, with a cry that startled us

all, my old nurse stood for a moment erect — one hand stretched out towards the sea, the other supporting her withered and worn-out frame. Her snow-white locks hung wildly over her shrunken cheeks, and her poor glassy eyes were fixed upon some imaginary object.

“ ‘Woe, woe, woe !’ half screamed the old dame, in her native tongue. ‘Woe to the princely race of O’Connor !—the Ban of the Sassanach—the curse of the oppressor—has fallen ! The home of the hero lies low !’

“ And clasping her hands together, she fell back into her chair insensible. The two women screamed and hid their faces in their hands. I am not superstitious ; but I felt a chill creep over me. I was rising to assist my old nurse, when the rapid fall of a horse’s hoof on the road without, caused me to pause. The instant after, it stopped at the door. A foot approached, and a powerful hand dashed in the frail door. I did not shriek, but I trembled in every limb. The little hall was crossed,

the door pushed opened, and the towering form of Ulick O'Connor entered the room. His plumed hat was beaten and torn in shreds by the storm: his mantle was drenched: his face and features were flushed and distorted with passion.

“‘ Ulick, my God, Ulick ! what has happened ?” I exclaimed, as I rushed forward, and caught his arm.

“ With a single stride, he reached the window, tore off the shutters, and, with a wild laugh, said—

“‘ There ! behold the last home of the O'Connor of the West ! Even on such a night as this, the cursed Sassanach has made it too hot to hold the last of its possessors.’

“ I looked out stupified. The Castle of the Lakes was in a sheet of flame.

“ The wild cry of a child caused me to start round even in that moment of terrible excitement; and then I saw Ulick throwing off his cloak, and, beneath, I beheld a little

girl, drenched, half-suffocated, and terror-stricken. Motioning with his hand for my two paralyzed attendants to leave the room, Ulick, after casting a look upon the aged nurse, said, staying me by the arm as I was hastening to assist her—

“‘ You may spare yourself, Matilda : the dead require no care, but to place them in their last resting-place. Listen to the living and outcast O’Connor for the last time. We may never meet again !’

“I was awe-struck. My old nurse was, indeed, dead ; and the child which Ulick drew from beneath the folds of his mantle, nearly so.

“‘ Listen to me, Matilda,’ said my brother ; ‘ take this child, and rear it as you would your own. This girl is—’ he hesitated a moment, pressed his hand to his brow, and then said, in a low, agitated voice—‘ This child, named Aleen, and born in wedlock, is mine.’

“‘ Yours, Ulick !’

“And I took the little trembling thing in my arms, with its pale, but lovely, face turned up towards me. I pressed it to my bosom, as if it was its natural resting-place. It was between three and four years old, just the age mine would have been had it lived. I kissed its cold cheek and lips, and, even in its terror, it smiled upon me. That moment, in my heart of hearts, I vowed I would be a fond and true mother to it.

“‘There, that will do,’ said O’Connor bitterly. ‘You will have time enough for fondness. Hear what I have to say, for my time is brief.’—He unslung from his neck a heavy casket, held by a strong clasp of leather. ‘In that,’ said Ulick, ‘are the O’Connor jewels, worth above thirty thousand pounds. Should circumstances require it, sell them; they will be a sufficient fortune for that child, if she never have another. But though I know you deserted the faith of your forefathers, you must take an oath upon this emblem of our redemp-

tion. An oath is an oath which catholic and heretic will equally respect.'—So saying, he took a jewelled crucifix from his neck, and handed it to me, exclaiming, 'Swear to rear that child in the religion of its ancestors—the only true faith. Swear never to attempt to sow the cursed seeds of your own heretical creed in its mind; and—more than all—swear'—and he spoke passionately—'swear, if she lives, that she shall never wed a Fitz-maurice.' "

Gerald Granville hid his face in his hands for a moment; and then looking up with a countenance pale and anxious, said in a very low voice—

" Dear madam, did you take that oath ? "

" No, Colonel—the oath I did *not* take; for as O'Connor ceased speaking, a man's face was thrust into the room, and a harsh deep voice said, ' The O'Connor is lost ! The cursed horse of the Sassanach are coming up the valley. One moment lost, is death.'—O'Connor seized

his mantle.—‘Swear!’ vociferated he. ‘Be quick.’ Several musket-shots were then heard. ‘To horse!’ shouted the man from without.—‘I swear, Ulick,’ said I, ‘to be a mother to it—never to bias it in its—’ ‘Are you mad, Prince?’ shouted the man, rushing into the room, and seizing O’Connor by the arm; ‘they are entering the bridle-road. To horse, or we are lost!’ Ulick was dragged from the room, and I heard, the moment after, the hoofs of his horse striking the flinty-road as he spurred furiously up the steep pass that led from the cottage into the mountains.

“Minute details of what followed the flight of O’Connor from Ireland are unnecessary. After a time, I arranged my affairs, and proceeded to England, where, with my husband’s family, I easily passed off Aleen as my own daughter; for during the troubled state of Ireland, little or no intercourse took place between me and my relatives. I settled, after a time, in a delightful villa, which I purchased

near Lord Atherstone's and there, in the culture and education of my beloved charge, years passed over cheerfully and happily.

“ Often and often, have I pondered over that eventful night when Aleen was consigned by my brother to my care. In vain I have tormented my brain in conjectures, as to who was the mother of Aleen ; but not the most distant clue could I gain—I could fix upon no female in any station or rank I knew, likely to have become the wife of O'Connor.

“ Though I did not take any oath to my brother to fulfil his wishes, I still considered it was my duty to act according to his expressed desire. Aleen was accordingly reared in the catholic faith. But it seemed that Providence early implanted in her mind a desire to be acquainted with the Scriptures, ‘ Why mother,’ she would say to me, even at the early age of twelve years, ‘ Why, beloved mother, should I worship God in a different place than you ?

Why should a priest, as you call Mr. Mc. Mahon, tell me to do things quite different from what I see you do? I wish to pray to God as you do, and read the Bible. But Father Mc. Mahon says I must not, only as he directs me.'

"But were I to detain you with all the arguments used by Aleen, even when a child, I should become tedious. Suffice it to say, vain were my intentions. At sixteen years of age, Aleen firmly declared it was quite useless for Mr. Mc. Mahon to urge and torment her further. She *would* read the Scriptures; adding that, in heart, she was a protestant—I could do no more.

"Not one word of Ulick's fate could I learn. The entire O'Connor estates were confiscated; but I had already determined that Aleen should inherit all my fortune. Besides which she possessed a noble fortune in the jewels left by O'Connor; for I considered it better to dispose of part of the magnificent gems consigned to

me, which brought nearly twenty thousand pounds. This sum, when Aleen was eight years old, was placed out at interest; so that, when she is of age, that alone will be an ample fortune.

“Singular enough, from want of thought, when we first encountered you, on our journey up to London, I did not imagine that you were in any way connected with the Irish family of Fitzmaurice; but when you mentioned it yourself, one evening in Mrs. Mc. Mahon’s house in London, the name caused me to turn sick at heart; for it recalled the past, almost forgotten, to my mind. The terror of losing Aleen—of having her torn from me, should our intimacy continue, and reach Ulick’s knowledge—for, I knew not how it was, but I had latterly found he was still alive and kept an eye upon our movements—so afflicted me, that I resolved, on the instant, strange as it might appear to you, to quit London and return to the country.

“ I did so, as you are aware. Three years more passed. It was then Aleen declared her determination of becoming a Protestant ; and then it was I became aware that Ulick O’Connor lived, and was either near at hand himself, or had certain intelligence of our proceedings conveyed to him. About this time, I received a letter, left by an unknown messenger. On opening it, to my extreme surprise, I found it was from Ulick O’Connor. Not one word of the past was mentioned in this epistle ; nor did he refer to his own life from the period of our separation. He bitterly bewailed the change in Aleen’s religion, and blamed me for not taking more stringent measures to retain her in her forefathers’ creed. He also bade me be aware of again renewing an acquaintance with a Fitzmaurice, or he would claim his child, and remove her from my care. After many other remarks tending nearly to the same point, he ended

by saying, he wished, as Aleen's health seemed to require it, that I should go abroad and pass a winter or two in Italy; and that if—according to his request—I would make Turin my residence for a time, he would contrive to visit that city, and most probably make himself known to his child. This was the purport of his letter; but till peace was established, I was unable to visit the Continent.

"A very intimate friend of mine, Mrs. Dalton, expressing a wish to accompany us, we commenced our journey, and reached here without any inconvenience. In again meeting with you, Colonel, I once more see the hand of Providence. You saved the life of my beloved girl. I was now resolved to struggle no longer against what appeared to me to be the decrees of Fate. It seemed that Aleen and you were destined for each other. She did not attempt to conceal her attachment; neither do I see why I should be so insincere as to pretend ignorance of the fact. Aleen, from

your first meeting, though then scarcely fourteen, never forgot the service you rendered her. In again preserving her life, you firmly riveted an affection that no circumstances, I feel satisfied, will extinguish, or even weaken. Yesterday, after I had brought my mind to this way of thinking, I received a note containing simply these words: "I will see you, Matilda, this evening at six o'clock. I request you will be alone.—ULICK." Need I tell you how my heart beat at the prospect of this meeting? We met—warmly on my part—coldly, alas! on his.

"Ulick was changed, indeed; but he had the same towering grandeur of height: his hair was still untouched by time; but the lines in his face were strongly marked. The features, too, were much altered. Still, there was no mistaking the princely O'Connor, even in a monk's dress. When first I saw that dress, I started, and he probably saw by my looks that I wondered whether he had really

become a monk; for he said—‘ I merely wear this dress to avoid recognition—I rank as a general officer in the French service, and was here with the Duke de Vendôme; but as I know many persons in this city, and do not wish to be discovered, I have adopted this disguise.’ Before I could ask any question, he cut me short by these words: ‘ Listen to me, Matilda; for what I have now to say will have a decided influence upon your future happiness and that of my child. You have—perhaps you could not avoid it—renewed your acquaintance with Colonel Fitzmaurice. He has saved the life of my child. So far I am his debtor. I visited him this morning for the express purpose of stating to *him* what I will now state to *you*. But I was interrupted. Time and the knowledge that I was deceived by a detested villain, has removed much of my animosity against the name and race of the Fitzmaurices. You will do me justice in supposing I am deeply grateful for the preservation of my child’s life.

I am aware of Colonel Fitzmaurice's attachment to Aleen; and I can very well imagine that that feeling may be, or is, returned. But their union can never take place with my consent, except on certain conditions.'

"Name them, Ulick," I breathlessly exclaimed.

"Hear me out," interrupted my brother, impatiently, and in a tone I did not like."

"Good Heavens, madam!" anxiously and eagerly demanded Gerald, "name those conditions, I beseech you. The expression of your features alarms me."

"Alas! my dear friend, they might as well be buried in oblivion, for I am as satisfied, as I sit here, that neither you nor Aleen would, for one moment, listen to them; and I at once said so to Ulick—O'Connor requires that both you and Aleen renounce what he calls your heretical creed, and return to the faith of your forefathers. And again, that you, Gerald Fitzmaurice, abjure your allegiance to the

Queen of England, and devote all your future energies to restore to the British throne its rightful sovereign—that the rank of a general officer in the French service—”

“Madam, madam!” exclaimed Gerald, in a voice of indignation, and starting from his chair, “your brother is mad—worse than mad, to—”

He paused, for the door suddenly opened, and Ulick O’Connor stood before them. He still wore his monkish attire; but the cowl was thrown back, disclosing the noble head and fine features of the O’Connor. A strange smile passed over his features, as he said—

“Excuse my hearing your words, Colonel Fitzmaurice: they were loud enough to reach further than *my* ears. You say I am mad; perhaps so. Had you the wrongs to bear that I have—hunted, outlawed, proscribed, robbed of my fair inheritance, deprived of the rank my ancestors bore for centuries, my very religion made a mockery and a pretence to plunder

and trample upon an ill-starred race, whose only crime was fighting for their lawful king, hunted from his own kingdom by an unnatural daughter and rebellious subjects—I ask you," he continued, fixing his gaze upon the calm features of our hero—"I ask you, if you can wonder should such a victim become mad? Are you an Irishman? Are you aware that your own father shed his heart's blood in defence of his lawful king? that the power you serve outlawed your noble father—confiscated his property, and robbed his children of their inheritance? Yet you think the O'Connor mad because he has asked you to win the woman you profess to love, by becoming what your father was before you."

"I have not interrupted you, O'Connor," said Gerald Granville, with perfect calmness, "till you should finish whatever it pleased you to say. As Aleen's father, nothing you could utter should provoke my anger. I respect your feelings, and shall not attempt to

argue against your prejudices ; but your assertions have no solid foundation. A weak, imbecile monarch throws away his crown, and, like a child tired of a toy, wishes to seize it again. With his child's ingratitude, I have nothing to do. But I *will* say it was base and cowardly, when driven from his own country, by his indignant subjects, to come to our unhappy land, and, without one feeling of pity for the sufferings of Irishmen, or what they might endure in supporting his unjust cause, he used them as tools to regain a crown, to which he no longer possessed a shadow of right ; and then, in the hour of need, left them to pay the penalty, from which he took care to fly. That my father and you should join the standard of James, may appear reasonable and right ; for neither my father or you denied his claim to the crown he abandoned. The voice of the English nation called William of Orange to the throne. I was then a child, reared by my mother's brother, and I

was educated in the same faith as my unfortunate mother and uncle professed. The succession to the throne of Great Britain was firmly and securely established, when I entered the service of her Majesty, and willingly, and with all my heart, took the oath of allegiance. I therefore am justified in thinking any man insane who would propose to me to forsake my religion—perjure myself by accepting service under a power ever hostile to England, and swear to embark in the service of a man whose father cruelly abused the generosity and faithfulness of my unfortunate countrymen. To win Aleen—God, that sees and reads my heart, knows I would sacrifice everything a man could sacrifice with honor. Would Aleen herself accept a hand, sullied and disgraced by—”

“Never, dear Gerald, never!” exclaimed a voice, soft, sweet, but firm. And the same instant, O’Connor’s daughter advanced into the saloon, and at once held out her hand to

her delighted lover, with a look of such perfect confidence and affection, as filled the heart of Gerald Granville with rapture, as he pressed the hand he held, with reverence and devotion, to his lips.

Ulick O'Connor stood gazing upon the beautiful and graceful form of his daughter, while his striking features were agitated, under the influence of contending feelings.

"Dearest girl, how is this?" interrogated Mrs. Atherstone, starting to her feet. "Why, dearest, have you left your room?"

"Because, beloved mother, for such I shall always feel you have been to me," replied Aleen, tenderly embracing her aunt—"because I heard, in tones of excitement, the voice of him who saved my life at the risk of his own. I heard other voices, also, as I sat in my chamber, which you know is next to this; and words fell upon my ear that pained me to the heart. I could not bear to hear him,

to whom I owe so much, spoken to so harshly, and endure it so calmly for my sake."

Colonel Granville gazed upon the sweet speaker with strong emotion, and many a bitter thought rushed through his brain; while Ulick O'Connor remained motionless with his eyes fixed upon them both. But not a word escaped his lips.

"How can I find words, dearest girl," said the colonel, "to thank you for those kind feelings you have expressed? Henceforth, if life cannot be devoted to you, no other tie shall weaken the feeling of love and reverence I feel in my heart for you. Stern necessity may separate us, but no human power can sever two hearts united in a pure love, and a feeling of self-respect."

A tear stole down the cheek of Aleen, as her lover kissed the hand he held, and then resigned it.

Turning to her father, Gerald said, calmly—
"I shall not attempt, Ulick O'Connor, to

combat your opinions, or expect to change your feelings or intentions with respect to me. To gain Aleen's hand, there is no sacrifice, as I have already said, compatible with honour, which I would not make. But let that subject rest. Still, before I resign my only hope of happiness in this life, I will hazard a question ; that this moment strikes me as important. I have borne, without resentment, all you have said. Therefore, excuse the question I now put to you. What proof, Ulick O'Connor, have you ever given, to this dear lady, that Aleen is your child ?"

The start the prince gave, as this question reached his ear, surprised them all. Aleen's face became deadly pale ; with parted lips, she stood gazing at the fearful change that came over the features of her father ; while Mrs. Atherstone, astounded and bewildered by the question, and by the visible emotion it caused O'Connor, scarcely breathed.

"Colonel Fitzmaurice," burst from the

quivering lips of O'Connor, in a tone as if the words choked him, "you count upon the service you rendered me in saving my child's life. You use this as a shield, behind which you may, with impunity, insult her father. Who, I say, ever dared to doubt the word of Ulick O'Connor? I say she is my child. Who dares to say she is not?"

"I have not said she is not," returned Gerald Granville, with perfect calmness of tone and manner. "The happiness of my whole life is at stake. Who is there that would not grasp at a shadow of hope? Then turning, with a faint smile, to Mrs. Atherstone, who he saw, was suffering much, he added—

"None without hope e'er loved the brightest fair,
For love will hope when reason would despair."

"Sir," exclaimed O'Connor; "you had a deeper meaning in the question you asked, than a mere random observation." You count yourself a man of refined honour, to judge by some

of your late expressions. I request a direct answer."

"You shall have it, O'Conor," returned the Colonel; "but not here. My reasons for what I said, you shall have. Name any hour to-morrow, and I will make it a point to be alcne."

"Be it so," replied O'Connor, naming an early hour.

Gerald Granville then, in a few, but kind words, bade Mrs. Atherstone, who looked miserable, farewell. Taking the passive hand of Aleen in his own, while O'Connor walked gloomily to a window, and stood with folded arms gazing upon vacancy, he said—

"Aleen, dearest, best beloved, to you I cannot, and will not, say farewell for ever—for the words would choke me. Blessed with the knowledge that I possess a place in that dear heart, I will struggle on, and hope till hope becomes reality. By day and by night I will dream of you. Your image will ever be before

me ; though absent, you will be present ; for so faithfully will my heart treasure your image, that not a feature, nor a line, will ever be forgotten."

Drawing the weeping girl towards him, he pressed his lips upon her fair and beautiful brow ; and, whispering the words—

" Remember and hope to the last," hastened from the saloon.

CHAPTER VI.

WITHOUT the power of locomotion, such as the present period possesses, we must, nevertheless, request our kind readers to leave the fair climate of Italy, and pass over, without the inconvenience of the transit, to the more nebulous climate of Ireland.

At the period that the scene described in our preceding chapter took place, our worthy and respected friend and lawyer, Mr. Briefless, was

in a sad state of perplexity ; having received, the day before, a letter from Sir William Granville O'Grady's lawyer, stating that a document had been discovered amongst some papers found in a chest at Castle Granville, of a later date than the one purporting to bestow upon Gerald Granville, as a gift, the estate in Oxfordshire and the eighty-thousand pounds in Indian securities ; and, that this new-found document, completely annulled the other. Therefore, that Sir William O'Grady was resolved to dispute the previous document, and claim the whole, as direct heir.

Now, though the worthy lawyer laughed at this daring attempt to contest his favorite's rights, just at the very period that the lawyer was on the point of making a most eligible purchase, yet it annoyed and perplexed him, for he knew the law ; and though he felt convinced there was not a shadow of truth in the declaration of the enemy, yet much delay and

vexatious costs would ensue; and, moreover, it showed him there was still active villainy at work—to rob his client of his inheritance.

Mr. Briefless was in his study in the middle of a very cautious reply to the London lawyer, when his footman interrupted him by stating that a gentleman was below, who requested an interview immediately.

“Who is he, Thomas? Do you know him?”

“Can’t say, positively, I ever saw him, sir; don’t think I ever did. Monstrous red face, sir.”

“Ah!” muttered the lawyer, as his thoughts rambled back to the man with the monstrous mouth. “Very strange! Always something brewing in that quarter. Shouldn’t be at all surprised if this man with the red face had something to do with the man with the mouth. Show him up, Thomas—by the Lord Harry, I’ll put a finishing stroke to their intrigues, by-and-by.”

The door opened, and the visitor with the red face entered the room, carrying a large sealed brown paper parcel under his arm. He was a tall, and very stout man, with apparently no neck ; and his round, large head, perfectly bald, appeared as if growing from the shoulders. The face was broad and full ; and as Thomas said, fiery red. The stranger limped in his walk, and one shoulder was somewhat higher than the other. He had neither whiskers or beard ; and the features of the face had been evidently distorted by some previous fit, or attack of some kind. He appeared in great agitation ; and his eyes were fixed upon Mr. Briefless, with so strange and wild an expression, as startled the little lawyer. There was, nevertheless, something about the stranger's face, figure, &c., that struck him as familiar, or, at least, he had seen some one whom he could not recollect, very like him.

“Sir,” began the stranger, laying his hand upon the back of the chair, which Mr. Brief-

less put forward for him, "sir, may I beg a glass of water? I feel—my God!—I do *not* feel." And he pressed his hand to his forehead.

The lawyer sprang to his feet, turning pale, and took the bell in his hand to summon Thomas, when the stranger reeled forward, and fell right against the terrified Thomas, who just then entered.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Briefless, "What is all this?" Hold him up, Thomas. Ring the bell. Summon Mrs. Silvertongue. Run for Doctor Caterpulse. Throw some water over his face."

The noise brought up the housekeeper, who, immediately dispatched Thomas for the Doctor while she hastened to raise the stranger's head.

"He's dead, sir!" ejaculated she, "not a doubt of it."

"Good Lord! don't say so," exclaimed the agitated lawyer. "Wouldn't, for fifty guineas,

such a thing happened—Good Lord ! How pale he is now ! Was as red as fire two minutes ago. Ha ! here's Caterpulse, thank God !”

“ What have you got, Briefless ? A case of apoplexy, eh ?” And he pulled out his instruments to bleed.

“ Oh ! friend Caterpulse,” ejaculated the lawyer, dolefully, “ this is a shocking affair ; isn’t it fearful ?”

“ No ; quite a common case, friend Briefless ; but it’s all up with him ; he’s as dead as a herring.”

“ Don’t say that,” responded the lawyer, quite bewildered. “ Monstrous red face, eh ?”

“ Not at all,” replied the doctor, very quietly putting up his lancet. “ On the contrary, it’s a very white face. But who is he ?”

“ Can’t say for the life of me. Oh, dear ! And you and some friends to dinner.”

“ Ha ! ha !” grinned the doctor. Don’t be alarmed. Won’t hurt our appetites. He’s no

relative or friend, then ? All right ! I wish I had him. Worth ten guineas."

"Oh, Lord ! oh, Lord ! how you talk !" moaned Mr. Briefless ; " no more feeling than a stone—unfortunate man !"

"Send for the coroner, friend Briefless," said the doctor ; " sooner the better. Soon find out who he is."

When the inquest was held, the pockets of the deceased were searched. They contained only a few gold coins, some silver, and trifling articles, but neither card, paper, or documents —that could afford any clue as to whence came the unfortunate deceased.

"Good Lord, I forget !" suddenly exclaimed Mr. Briefless ; " there is the brown paper parcel in my study ; he had that under his arm when he came in. Run, Thomas, and bring it here."

The coroner and jury were on the tip-toe of expectation, their curiosity being already much excited.

Thomas appeared with the parcel.

"Pray, Mr. Briefless," said the coroner, "open that."

The lawyer broke the wax, cut the cord, and drew forth, with exceeding admiration, a large fold of parchment. The moment his eyes rested on the few words on the outer sheet, the worthy lawyer cut a most extroardinary caper, to the amazement of the silent and grave party assembled, exclaiming, in a voice of exultation—

"By the Law Harry, I have it ! Not a doubt of it ! Oh, dear, what a fortunate event ! Look, Gilmer," turning to his own clerk. "Look ! you wrote it—do you know that writing ?" And then the lawyer, totally forgetting those around him, snapped his fingers, saying, "I have them hip and thigh, by the Law Harry ! I'll unkennel them. What a blaze there will be !"

"Mr. Briefless, Mr. Briefless," impatiently and angrily interrupted the coroner, "this is

indecent and most irregular conduct. What is that document you hold in your hand? You seem perfectly acquainted with it."

"Acquainted with it, Mr. Dulcet!" exclaimed the lawyer, in a triumphant tone, "why, I took every word of it down myself. Twenty-seven sheets of parchment; could not be drawn on less. Twenty-five thousand a-year besides large funded property."

"But what is it? You must not keep us in this way, Mr. Briefless."

"Good Lord! Ah, well! Excuse me, gentlemen," said the little lawyer; "I am somewhat bewildered; but you wish to know what this is. This, then, is the lost will of the late Sir Hugh Granville, Baronet, of Granville Castle and Innismoyle, Ireland, and Deer Hurst, Oxfordshire."

“God bless us!” now exclaimed the equally surprised coroner and jury; for all in the City of Cork were well acquainted with the late Baronet, and had heard of the proceedings

which, in consequence of the will being lost, had given the property to Sir William Granville O'Grady.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Briefless, on the recovery of this will. It is altogether a most extraordinary business," said the coroner. "Is there nothing in that parcel that will give us any information as to who this unfortunate man is, or where he comes from?"

"Nothing whatever, Mr. Dulcet," replied the lawyer; "nothing but the will."

A verdict therefore was returned of "Died by the visitation of God."

Advertisements were put in the daily papers, and rewards were offered for any information concerning the deceased, who was buried at the expense of the worthy lawyer. Then, without further delay, he posted off to Dublin after writing the joyful news to our hero, now, without question, Sir Gerald Granville; as in the will it was expressly stated that he

should take the name of Granville, and drop the name of Fitzmaurice altogether.

It was the first care of Mr. Briefless to have the will duly registered, with a due observance of all the forms of law then in use. Letters were written to Sir William Granville O'Grady, and also to his solicitors, stating the recovery of the will, and requiring the surrender of all property belonging to the late Baronet.

No trace could Mr. Briefless obtain as to who the person was that brought the lost will back. It appeared a most extraordinary and unaccountable business. At times Mr. Briefless was haunted with a strange feeling that the man was not unknown to him, and that he had seen him before ; but the more he strove to recollect where or when he beheld him, the more troubled and perplexed he became. He wrote to Mr. Harmer, and also to Mr. Gardener, who resided in Devonshire for the benefit of his health. From the former gentleman he received an answer, congratulating

him on the extraordinary recovery of the will. Mr. Briefless had, moreover, written to Gerald ; but he feared the letter would not reach him in Turin, as in the last communication he had received from the Colonel, he stated that he was about to leave, in order to join the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, in Holland.

“By the Law Harry!” exclaimed Mr. Briefless, “is not this strange—going to get shot at again! Just fancy a man with twenty-five thousand pounds a year and more, sleeping with his head in a pool of water; for I am told they put the whole country under water there when fighting, and then standing up next morning to be riddled—and all for—eh, what’s the matter now?” hastily demanded the lawyer, turning sharp round—for he had a habit of talking out when excited and alone—and a sudden exclamation of surprise from his housekeeper startled him.

“Nothing, sir, nothing,” replied Mrs. Silvertongue; “I was only thinking how very

uncomfortable it must be to sleep with one's head in a pool of water—very apt to take cold, I should think."

"Yes, my dear woman, and so would any one else, except Sir Gerald Granville. But who's below? I thought I heard a man's voice."

"Oh dear, I forgot," said Mrs. Silvertongue. "A gentleman below in the parlour wishes to see you. The same person as was in Cork last year—a Mr. Greathead."

"What!" gasped the lawyer. "God bless me! The man with the mouth come back again! By the Law Harry, you're not joking, are you, my dear Mrs. S.?"

"Dear me—no, Mr. B." replied the house-keeper, dropping a low curtsey; "I would not think of such a thing."

The lawyer looked puzzled, and then said—

"I must see him; no help for it. Won't look at his mouth though. Don't care that for him now," and he snapped his fingers. "Show

him up, my dear Mrs. Silvertongue. By the Law Harry I have him this time." And the little lawyer laughed out loud, in the midst of which in walked Mr. Greathead, bowing and smirking, and twisting his capacious mouth into all manner of shapes.

"Happy—nay, delighted, to see you looking so well, Mr. B.," said the London solicitor. "Ah, Mr. B., you may laugh now. You have the best of it." And trying to look facetious, he made so frightful a grimace, that Mr. Briefless involuntarily exclaimed—

"Good Lord! what a—! Beg pardon. Take a chair. To what circumstance, my dear sir, do I owe the pleasure of this visit?"

"I wait on you, my dear sir, personally, though at great inconvenience to myself. Very unpleasant, friend Briefless, crossing the Channel between our two countries. I suffer horribly at sea. Had you seen me—"

"Now God forbid!" exclaimed the little lawyer; "that is, you must know, I suffer

myself from that horrid malady, and seeing another, makes it worse."

"Unquestionably, so it does," returned Mr. Greathead; "but I come to you by the desire of Sir—that is—Mr. William Granville O'Grady; for in your letters you state that the late Sir Hugh Granville had the power to will the title and estates, by letters patent, to his nephew, Gerald Granville."

"You are correct, sir, perfectly correct," replied Mr. Briefless, rubbing his hands, and looking highly elated. "Sir Hugh obtained the power to do so from his late Majesty of glorious memory, in reward for his services in India. Of course, had there been no will, this grant would have been useless, as it was only the *power* to will which the late Sir Hugh had."

"Understand it perfectly," rejoined the man with the mouth. "Often the case—break up the entail for certain purposes. However, I have merely to say, that Mr. William O'Grady has

no intention whatever to dispute the will, or in any way interrupt the succession, therefore, any proceedings in law are unnecessary. Your client can step into the noble property thus unexpectedly restored to him, without any trouble. By-the-bye, have you obtained any information respecting the individual who had the will in his possession?"

Mr. Briefless, as he replied, perceived the keen grey eyes of Mr. Greathead, intently fixed upon him. "I have had no information whatever on that subject," said he.

"Most strange! humph! And you cannot bring to your memory any recollection of having seen that individual at any period of your life, eh?"

"I might have seen him," returned the little lawyer, not liking to be cross-questioned by his brother lawyer. "Perhaps I may recollect him yet. I think I shall."

"Hah! you *think* so," uttered Mr. Greathead, with what Mr. Briefless thought a start

of surprise. "He might have been one of the late Baronet's domestics, eh?"

"No; not at all. By the Law Harry!" exclaimed Mr. Briefless, with great animation, "talking of domestics puts me in mind—"

"Of who?" eagerly interrupted Mr. Great-head, making a most hideous distortion of feature.

Mr. Briefless winced under the infliction; but replied—

"The man, to a certain extent, resembled Mr. Gardener, the late Baronet's secretary. That is the resemblance that has been haunting me. But he was certainly not bald when last I saw him. Neither was he so stout; and Mr. Gardener always wore spectacles. But there was a strong likeness. By-the-bye, I wrote to Mr. Gardener, who is, I believe, in Devonshire; but I have not had an answer yet. He was very ill. Hope he is not dead." And the lawyer fixed his eyes stoutly upon his brother solicitor.

"Hope not, hope not, indeed," responded Mr. Greathead. "Worthy man, I always heard you say. Wasn't present at our trial—confined by some severe fit or other, eh?"

"So his physician declared in court," returned Mr. Briefless, full of thought.

"Well, Mr. Briefless, I will not detain you. I will read over the will; take a few extracts; and return to London. Severe blow to my client, Mr. Briefless. By-the-bye, your worthy and distinguished client, Colonel Gerald Granville, gives mine a very fair chance of stepping into his shoes. Singular that he should prefer a life of such peril, eh?"

"No, not singular," said the lawyer, in a vexed tone. "Thousands of others are just as mad; but I trust he will return at once, when he receives my letter."

"Well, friend Briefless, I will not detain you any longer. Your time is valuable."

Mr. Greathead then extended his hand, which our worthy friend very unwillingly

allowed to grasp his ; and then Thomas was summoned to shew the London solicitor out.

“ I trust in God,” exclaimed Mr. Briefless, as the door closed, “ I trust I shall never see you again. What a dolt I have been ! As sure as I live, I can make out who stole the will ; and yet, it’s a confounded queer piece of business. But I’ll find it out—I will write and endeavour to discover if Mr. Gardener is dead. If he’s alive, why I’m wrong, that’s all.”

CHAPTER VII.

IF our skies in Ireland are not so blue, or our sunshine so bright as in more favoured climes, yet when the sun does shine, and we have a clear blue sky over-head, with its light fleecy clouds flitting across it, the heat tempered by a delicious west wind fanning the cheek in the month of June, how charming and refreshing to the sight are the bright, green meadows and sparkling streams flowing through them which meet the eyes of the traveller as he descends that most beautiful of rivers the Royal Shannon!

As this river springs into existence, it at once assumes a noble aspect. Rushing from Lough Allen, it flows placidly at times through the centre of Ireland, from about north-east to the westward of south ; and finally loses itself in the great Atlantic, with a span at its mouth of nine miles or more.

On one of Ireland's brightest and sunniest days, in the early part of June, a large, open boat, gaily-painted, and pulled by six able oarsmen, was descending the Shannon, having left the then well and strongly-fortified town of Banagher in the morning. Over the stern of the boat was an awning ; but the sides were open, so that those seated in the wide stern of the barge might enjoy the lovely prospect as they slowly descended the stream. Two ladies and one gentleman were beneath the awning, and several domestics, male and female, in the bows of the barge.

The two ladies were the Honourable Mrs. Atherstone and her daughter ; the gentleman

was an elderly man, of extremely pleasing manners and appearance. He was well-dressed, though with more of the country in his attire, than the city. By his numerous attendants and retainers, he was usually styled Mac Guello Phatrick ; but his name was Fitz-Patrick. He owned a very handsome mansion on the borders of Lough-Derg ; and considerable property in the vicinity.

To avoid confusion in our narrative, we will here lay before our readers the events that took place in Italy, after the interview between O'Connor and Colonel Granville ; and the cause of the sudden return to Ireland of Mrs. Atherstone and her daughter, in order to reside at Atherstone Hall, to which they were proceeding, under the escort of Mr. Fitz-Patrick, a very esteemed and old friend of her late husband and herself.

When Colonel Granville left the saloon, a silence of several minutes was maintained by the three individuals remaining in it ; for each

was busy with his or her own thoughts. Mrs. Atherstone was completely bewildered, if not confounded, by the question which Colonel Granville proposed to her brother. Aleen knew not what to think. Could her lover really have any foundation for his singular question? As to Ulick O'Connor, he very quickly recovered his composure—though his look and manner was somewhat troubled, as he turned to his sister, saying—

“ Let what has passed, be banished from your memory. I bear no malice to Colonel Fitz-maurice for his strange and unmeaning question; but there is one thing, Matilda, that I insist on your immediately fulfilling, or I must now claim the guardianship of my child.”

These words made Aleen tremble, and her cheek blanch. A feeling of faintness came over her; and her beautiful head sank on the shoulder of her startled and alarmed aunt.

Ulick O'Connor saw the change, and marked

the look of his daughter; and a strange smile, for a moment, rested on his lip.

“What can you mean, Ulick?” asked Mrs. Atherstone, eagerly. “Say what you require. Do with me what you will; but, in mercy, do not rob me of my child.” And she burst into tears, embracing her weeping niece with more, if possible, than a mother’s fondness.

“Hear me, Matilda,” said O’Connor; and his voice lost its coldness and harshness. “I am no tyrant—and have no wish to inflict unnecessary sorrow upon you or my child. You are aware that formerly I staked life and fortune in the cause of James the Second; and the time is now coming when I shall again peril my life in the cause of his son. I have received, this day, secret intelligence that Queen Anne is stricken with a mortal malady. A few days will end her reign.”

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Mrs. Atherstone. “This is sudden and melancholy intelligence.”

" Yet, such is the fact," continued O'Connor. " The King of France intends fitting out a powerful armament, to send over to Scotland with the Chevalier St. George. I intend to join the squadron when it is ready. I had a double object in coming here. One of a political nature ; the other to see you and Aleen. Embarked heart and soul in this holy cause, there is nothing on earth that I would not sacrifice to ensure its success. Now could a party be raised in Ireland, by men of family, wealth, and influence, to co-operate with the same class in England, our success would be certain. To strengthen, then, our party in Ireland, is my object. When I came here, it was with the intention of proposing a husband to my daughter—a man of rank, of extensive property in Ireland, which, in addition to his personal exertions, he is willing to embark in our cause. He has already carried arms in the Spanish service—is young, remarkably hand-

some, and, in every way, a suitable husband even for *my* daughter."

Aleen scarcely breathed: her hand grasped that of her aunt convulsively; but neither she nor Mrs. Atherstone uttered a word.

O'Connor continued—

"This gentleman's father I have known for years. His son, Sir William Granville O'Grady, is the person of whom I speak."

"What!" exclaimed Aleen, starting into life and energy, as if electrified, and standing erect, with her eyes fixed unflinchingly upon her father. "That man? He who, by some base contrivance, robbed the preserver of my life of his rank and his inheritance? Never, never, father! In all else, I am your obedient child. I will renounce, at your will, all the dearest ties of my heart—go whither it may please you—endure privation, poverty, even the fearful agony of parting from the fondest, the most beloved of beings—my more than

mother. But Aleen O'Connor will never become the wife of the man you name!"

"Girl!" almost fiercely exclaimed O'Connor, "you are over-hasty—you wrong your father if you suppose he ever intended to force his daughter's inclination in a husband."

"Dearest father!" ejaculated Aleen, throwing herself upon her knees, in a passion of tears, and catching his hand in hers; "forgive me, I was, indeed, wrong and undutiful."

There was an evident struggle in the breast of O'Conner, as he gazed, for a moment, upon the fair and beautiful girl. He parted the hair from her clear and open forehead, and kissed her brow with a good deal of affection in his manner, saying—

"Go, my dear girl, leave me with your aunt. You shall not be separated; nor shall I require anything unreasonable of you. You deserted the faith of your fathers; and deep and bitter as was the pang which that gave me, I bore it. I was willing, seeing your at-

tachment to him, who saved your life, to wave old prejudices and feelings, and even give him my child, requiring him only to act as his sire did before him. I do not blame his refusal, because he acted on principles imbibed from his very infancy. But we will not talk over these things now. We may meet again, when the banished and proscribed O'Connor may place his foot upon the soil of his ancestors, without having the blood-hounds of the oppressor at his heels."

Aleen could not reply to these words; for she felt that anything she could say would make little impression on her father's mind. Pressing his hand to her lips with affection and reverence, she left the room.

"You are embarking in a wild and futile enterprise, Ulick," said Mrs. Atherstone, breaking the silence that followed Aleen's departure, and looking at her brother affectionately and sadly. "The succession to the throne of Great Britain is too firmly secured to be shaken by

any efforts of the Jacobite party. Confiscation, imprisonment, and death, will be the result now, as it was before."

" You are wrong, sister ; the succession is far from being securely settled. But leave politics aside. I mentioned there was one condition you must fulfil ; and that is to leave this city at once, without any further interview with Colonel Fitzmaurice, and proceed to Ireland. You have a noble and beautiful residence there, and you have not visited your people for years. Sir William Granville O'Grady will visit you there. I do not ask you to use any influence with Aleen, in persuading her to favor Sir William's proposals. She is prejudiced now ; she is young. But, at all events, let Sir William have a fair chance. We know not what time and absence may do."

A smile passed over the fine intellectual features of Mrs. Atherstone. It was a smile

that expressed much, very much indeed. But O'Connor, did not see it.

“I must leave this city at once,” resumed he, “after my interview, to-morrow, with Colonel Fitzmaurice, I shall cross the Alps into Switzerland, and travel to Paris as fast as possible. You had better proceed through the Tyrol, and afterwards descend the Rhine. You will thus avoid the seat of war. The journey is not much longer.”

“I am extremely willing,” said Mrs. Atherstone, “to reside in Ireland, and will be ready to leave Italy as soon as I can make arrangements for my journey. I certainly expect that you, Ulick, will explain this ungracious treatment of Colonel Granville, to himself personally.”

“Say no more on that subject,” said O'Connor, “I am neither ungracious nor ungrateful. The Colonel is a brave and gallant soldier: his father inflicted, undesignedly, on

me the deepest wound one man can inflict upon another. He won the hand of the only woman I ever loved."

"Then who, Ulick," asked Mrs. Atherstone, eagerly, and looking her brother steadily in the face, "who is, or was Aleen's mother?"

A slight flush passed over the cheek of Ulick O'Connel, as he replied—

"Some time or other you shall know; but I have provided that the secret shall not die with me. Take this," and he drew from within his vest a curious miniature case, richly jewelled; "should you hear of my death, for it may be my fate to fall in this struggle for a crown, you may open that locket which contains a portrait. Here is the key," handing her a minute gold key. "Promise me faithfully—give me your word, which I know you hold sacred, that you will not open that case, unless you hear of my death or receive permission from me to do so. Within, you will find the name of Aleen's mother—the date of

her birth, and the place she was born in, with several other particulars. I did not intend to give you this, now; but circumstances have caused me to change my intention. Stay, I have another motive acting on my mind. Should Aleen consent to accept the hand of Sir William Granville O'Grady—then, whether I shall be living or dead, it is necessary you should know who is Aleen's mother. Now, God bless you, Matilda!"

And embracing his sister with more affection than he had ever evinced, he hastily retired, leaving Mrs. Atherstone much affected, and in tears.

What passed the following day between Ulick O'Connor and Colonel Granville, Mrs. Atherstone knew not; but she heard that both her brother and the Colonel quitted Turin the same evening. In a day or two, Mrs. Dalton having departed for Florence, Mrs. Atherstone and her niece set out on their journey home, Aleen's spirits seemed

much depressed ; but, seeing that her aunt gave way to despondency, she exerted herself to the utmost to appear cheerful.

After a tedious and long journey they reached England in safety.

CHAPTER IX.

HAVING rested a week or more, they left England for Dublin, where they met Mr. Fitzpatrick, an old and esteemed friend of her husband's. At his pressing invitation, Mrs. Atherstone consented to pass a short time with his good lady at their residence, situated on the borders of Lough Derg.

Aleen's spirits revived on reaching Ireland, for, in Dublin, she heard the unexpected news of her lover's restoration to rank, and to the property of his uncle, by the recovery of the

lost will. This intelligence acted like a magic spell in restoring her usual health and vivacity; for she at once came to the conclusion that her father would never think of uniting her to the dreaded Mr. O'Grady, now deprived of his rank, wealth, and, consequently, influence. A vast weight was thus lifted from her mind and thoughts; for, although her father had declared he would never force her inclinations, yet, the idea of even seeing and hearing a suitor, whom no circumstances could ever make her look upon with any other feelings than those of detestation, pained her to the heart.

The last words Gerald uttered as they parted, came fresh to her memory—"Remember and hope!" And she did hope. As to remembrance, her heart too plainly told her she could never forget.

At times, too, the singular words the Colonel addressed to her father, demanding of him what proofs he had ever given that

Aleen *was* his child recurred to her memory, particularly in the lone hours of the night; and she wondered what could have given birth in the Colonel's mind to the necessity for such an inquiry.

Mrs. Atherstone, herself, thought much of the Colonel's words. The singular change in her brother's looks, when the question was put to him, and the agitation he could ill hide, caused her great surprise, and left open a wide field for the imagination to dwell upon.

After a short stay in Dublin, Mrs. Atherstone and Aleen, with Mr. Fitzpatrick, set out for the west. At Banagher they found a handsome barge belonging to Mr. Fitzpatrick, waiting their arrival to take them down the Shannon. Accordingly, they all embarked and proceeded along the noble stream. Aleen enjoyed the lovely scenes that opened every mile to their view. Mr. Fitzpatrick, who loved his country and all belonging to it,

was in high spirits. The day, as stated in the commencement of this chapter, was an uncommonly lovely one; the stream, clear and beautiful, reflected, as in a mirror, the bright sky and its gossamer clouds. Every rock, every distant crag, had its legend of fairy and elf and leprechauns.

“ Do you know, my dear young lady,” said Mr. Fitzpatrick, “ how this glorious stream gained its name of Shannon ?”

“ No, my dear Sir,” replied Aleen in high spirits, and delighting in legends and fairy lore, “ pray tell me any fairy legend of the beautiful lake we are approaching; I love stories of the past. While in Italy, I picked up many a tale of tower and lake.”

“ Well then, I will make a bargain with you ;” said Mr. Fitzpatrick, rubbing his hands and laughing, “ I will tell you a legend of Lough Derg, into which we shall soon run, provided you tell me a tale of Italy—a country full of romance of the past.”

"I agree," returned the maiden; "you give me a legend of your Irish lake, and you shall have one of an Italian lake."

"Come, that's agreed; your lady mother is witness to the contract," rejoined Mr. Fitzpatrick. "I never was out of my own country; but I will maintain that no part of Europe can boast of more natural beauties, in point of scenery, than the Emerald Isle. But first let me tell you how this stream acquired its name. A few words will do that. There was once a Princess as amiable as she was lovely, and as modest as she was amiable. Her name was Seinan—pronounced, Shannon—This princess, like Diana, was surprised bathing by her lover. Struck with terror and shame, she clasped her hands, turned her eyes to heaven, and leaped into the stream, never to rise again. From that event the river takes its name. So says tradition. But do you see that low, long promontory strteching itself right into Lough

Dergh, and the huge rock at the point ? That is called The Piper's Rock. And now I will give you my legend, which I call The Piper of Lough Derg."

The men rested on their oars, and the barge glided gently along, while Mr. Fitzpatrick began his fairy tale as follows :—

" Some hundreds of years ago, there lived in East Meath, a Prince called Marcus O'Malachlin. This chieftain joined the King O'Connor in his wars against the English invaders. The English chief, Raymond, marched against them, and finally drove O'Connor into the West. He slew the famous Donald Kavanagh and took the Prince Marcus O'Malachlin prisoner, after burning his Castle, laying waste his entire territory, and, as he thought and intended, utterly exterminating his whole family.

" But in that cruel proceeding he did not entirely succeed. Though the Prince's wife and three children perished in the flames of the Castle, one little boy, the youngest, was

providentially saved by his nurse, who fled with him into the mountains, and finally, half starved and worn-out, made her way with the child into the then wild country on the east shore of Lough Derg. There she died; and left the unfortunate young prince in a poor cabin which had afforded her a shelter. The boy was then only three years old; and the only token of his birth the old nurse saved, was his mother's jewelled bracelet, which, the very morning the Castle was burnt, she had given him for a plaything.

“The cabin belonged to a poor serf, his wife and two boys. The nurse, on her death-bed, declared to them who Marcus was, and gave them the bracelet making them take a solemn oath not to betray the boy to his enemies, or use the jewels and gold of the bracelet. The poor people thought she was mad, and had stolen the trinket, of whose value they knew nothing. They allowed the child to grow up with their own two sons; and, not daring to

show they possessed such an article as the bracelet, buried it, and kept to themselves the knowledge of the birth of Marcus. Marcus grew up a remarkably fine, athletic youth, vigorous in health and singularly handsome. He worked hard, and, by the time he reached manhood, few surpassed him in feats of strength. But otherwise he was no better informed than the commonest peasant in the district.

“ Suddenly, a wish to learn the pipes took possession of Marcus’s mind : he grew almost insane with the feeling, which mastered all others ; and hearing of a celebrated piper in one of the large towns where he went with his supposed brothers to a faction-fight, (for they enjoyed those pastimes even then,) he resolved to serve under him for a year and a day ; and, to the sorrow of his companions, he quitted his home, and followed the piper. In those days, the highest honour was conferred

on any man who could play well on either the pipe or the harp ; and even princes excelled in both those instruments.

“ Now enthusiastic as Marcus was, he nevertheless made but an indifferent piper. He was much more successful in all kinds of fighting ; while in making love to the bright eyes that would listen to his pipes, he was eminently successful.

“ The year and a day passed over, and Marcus set out on his journey home to see his supposed parents and brothers. But during a dark night, he wandered out of his way in traversing the borders of Lough Derg ; and, getting tired, and finding himself on a long, low promontory, which stretched out into the lake, he lay down to wait for the moon’s rising, and fell fast asleep. It so chanced that the spot on which Marcus reclined, was what is termed to this day in Ireland a fairy-ring, or meeting ground, of the ‘ good people.’ It was

a small circular plot of grass about fifty paces in circumference, and close to the waters of the lake.

“Now it happened that this was a meeting-night with the fairies ; and just as the moon threw her silvery beams over the calm surface of Lough Derg, they assembled in great numbers. Finding Marcus asleep on the sacred ground, they made a circle round him ; and seeing that he was a most beautiful youth, they determined to secure his future fortune. Fairies are remarkably fond of handsome mortals. They listened eagerly to his raving in his sleep ; and Marcus was full of his pipes, lamenting sorely his not being a first-rate performer. The ‘little people’ clapped their tiny hands ; and taking up Marcus’s pipes which lay beside him, they played the most beautiful tunes in the world. Marcus heard them in his sleep, and was enchanted.

“In the morning, he awoke, and a bright and glorious morning it was. Lo ! by his side,

he beheld the most superb pipes which mortal eyes ever rested on. Marcus rubbed his eyes, crossed himself, and felt confounded and amazed. But there, true enough, were the pipes in their splendid mountings of gold, together with rings and jewels of surpassing brilliancy.

“He looked round. Not a soul was near him ; and the view of the noble lake was hidden by the two large rocks at the end of the promontory. He now perceived that he had reposed within the magic circle of a fairy ring ; and with many vain thoughts rushing through his brain, he reverentially took up the magnificent pipes, and beheld a large gold plate, with an inscription on it in strange characters. But as he was unable to read any kind of writing, he thought little of the characters engraved on the gold plate.

“As he placed his fingers on the holes, a strange feeling crept over him ; and the beautiful airs that had so entranced him during the

night, came freshly and vividly to his memory. Completely inspired, he breathed into the pipes, and played upon them as no mortal before or since ever played. But what amazed him more than all, was, that the sounds, without any endeavour on his part, shaped themselves into the wild and beautiful melodies he had heard in his sleep.

“Now it so chanced, that while Marcus was thus entranced with his pipes, who should be entering Lough Derg close to the point where the musician was concealed by the rocks, but the great Desmond MacCarthy, Prince of Desmond. This powerful chieftain was a staunch friend of the English. A few months before the present time, he had been deposed by his son, and cruelly thrown into a dungeon. The English chief, Raymond, who, twenty years back, slew Marcus’s father, and burnt his mother and brothers, sent troops, and released MacCarthy from his prison. He was

then descending the Shannon to join Raymond in completely subduing his still rebellious son.

“Like most of the great Irish chieftains, MacCarthy was passionately fond of the pipes and the harp, when he heard the enchanting strains from Marcus’s instrument, which the light air from the land bore distinctly to his ear, he was amazed, and ordered his gilded barge to approach the spot.

“‘Never,’ said the Prince to his lovely daughter, Nesta, who sat beneath the purple silk awning over the stern with her bower maidens—‘never did such strains reach mortal ears! Who can the piper be? Whoever he is, he shall be my chief musician, and name his own salary.’

“Nesta, the flower of Meath, the fairest and the loveliest of maidens, sat perfectly entranced; for she, like her sire, dearly loved sweet melodies. As the barge approached, Marcus ceased; for the sound of oars caught

his ear. The Prince's chief officer now stepped ashore, and most politely requested Marcus to go on board the barge of the great MacCarthy.

"This our hero of the magic pipes very willingly did, for he was ambitious, and his eyes, moreover, were absolutely fascinated by the figure and face of the lovely Nesta, who, with pardonable curiosity, had ordered the curtains to be drawn aside in order to behold the player of the beautiful strains that had so charmed her. The stately figure of Marcus (for he was above six feet high), and his handsome face astonished the Prince, and amazed his daughter. But when Mc. Carthy beheld the gorgeous pipes encircled with gold and jewels, he started, saying to himself, 'This is no common piper, but some chieftain in disguise. Who are you, piper?' added the Prince, gazing alternately in the face of the youth, and at his splendid pipes. 'None but a king, or the son of a king, could possess such an instrument.'

“ Though somewhat uncouth in speech and manners, Marcus was not without wit and good sense. To say the pipes were a fairy gift, would not do ; and to state that he was a poor wood-cutter’s son, hurt his new ambitious desires. He therefore replied, ‘ My lord, my name is Marcus. I desire to become your piper, and to serve you in war, if it so please you, for a year and a day.’—‘ Be it so,’ rejoined the Prince ; ‘ I willingly agree. Your salary shall be princely. But what is that inscription on your pipes ?’—‘ My lord,’ answered Marcus, ‘ I leave it to your highness to peruse the inscription.’ But Mc. Carthy, though a great Prince, like many another in those days, could not read ; so, calling his chief priest or household confessor, he told him to decipher the inscription, and whisper its meaning to him.

“ The priest was a learned man, or else the inscription was in plain Irish ; for he at once turned to the Prince, and said the words meant,

‘I can belong only to the son of a king.’—‘Ha !’ ejaculated Mc. Carthy, ‘I thought so.’ And bidding the piper enter beneath the awning, the barge, and the fleet of boats that followed, moved on.”

Here Mr. Fitzpatrick paused; for the boat was now close to a small island.

“We will rest here for an hour,” said he; “for I find my story is getting too long on my hands. We will put up our tent and refresh ourselves, and then, my dear young friend, I will resume my fairy narrative. Perhaps you will feel more interest in the tale when I tell you that, from my piper of Lough Derg, spring the great families of the Fitzmaurices of Kerry and County Cork.”

“Oh, indeed !” exclaimed Mrs. Atherstone and Aleen, both thinking of Gerald Granville, whose family they knew traced itself to the great Kerry founder of their race—the son of Raymond.

“A tent was raised on a beautiful green spot

on the island, and a cold collation was spread, Aleen enjoyed the excursion beyond measure, and insisted on their kind entertainer continuing his tale, which interested her exceedingly. Accordingly, having plenty of time to spare, he resumed his legend of the piper of Lough Derg, in the following words :—

“ As the barge of the great Mc.Carthy continued its voyage, Marcus, inspired by the beauty of the Princess Nesta, filled the air with such entrancing harmony from his fairy pipes, as struck his hearers with amazement and delight. The Desmond took a splendid ring from his finger, and forced the piper to accept it, ordering at the same time a handsome mantle to be thrown over his peasant’s attire, till the latter could be replaced by garments more befitting his situation as chief piper to the Desmond. That evening, the Prince and his train disembarked at Portumna Castle, which, at this period, was a strong fortress.

“ My legend,” observed Mr. Fitzpatrick,

"would exceed all bounds were I to dwell upon all which the old chronicler relates of Marcus's exploits during the war that ensued against McCarthy's rebellious son.

"Of great stature and strength, and valiant to a fault, Marcus astonished the Prince by his exploits in war, as well as by his pipes in the festal hall. He twice saved the Desmond's life, who conferred on him the honour of knighthood, and rewarded him with a collar of gold. Besides his success in war and music, Marcus won secretly the love of the beautiful Nesta. One thing, however, marred his triumph. His manners and expressions were far from courtly, though he took some pains to improve himself. Nesta, who firmly believed he was a Prince in disguise, often implored him to drop his strange manner, and confess himself to her father. But Marcus implored her to wait till the second year of his service should expire, and then he would disclose all.

"Time rolled on. With his sword and his

pipes, the fame of Marcus spread far and wide. But the two years and a day (for he had engaged for a second period) were fast expiring, and Marcus knew not what to do. A sudden thought struck him. Accordingly, one fine morning, he mounted his horse, and, without a word, even to his beloved Nesta, he set out for what was, even then, called The Piper's Rock. He arrived at nightfall within half a mile of the spot, and fastened his horse to a branch of a tree. Then, having reached the well-remembered fairy ring, he placed an offering for the 'good people,' stretched himself on the spot, and, finally, fell fast asleep.

"What occurred while sleeping, he never knew. But when he awoke, he found himself lying at the foot of the tree, to the branch of which he had fastened his horse, whose neighing roused him—how he got there, puzzled him; but there he was. As he gained his feet, he perceived that his outward attire was changed. His cuirass, and the rest of his

armour was magnificent, and edged with gold; and engraved on the breast-plate, were two lines in the same character as of old on the pipes. Over all, he wore a rich mantle. To his saddle bow, hung a superb helmet, with a sweeping plume of Heron feathers. On the other side, depended a ponderous battle-axe, such as few men could wield; and, leaning against the tree, was a long, stout lance. His horse, also, was richly caparisoned.

“‘I’m unquestionably a prodigious favorite with the fairies,’ thought Marcus, as he gazed in admiration on his splendid arms. He seized the axe and twirled it over his head as if it were an ashen wand. Then, mounting his horse, he struck off into the open country. Riding on, towards mid-day he came up with a knight with twenty followers, all in bright armour: they were cross-bowmen on their way to join Raymond and Prince Desmond, who were going to give battle to MacCarthy’s son in the great plain before Limerick. ‘How is

that, Sir Knight?' inquired Marcus, in a most courteous tone and manner, quite different from his usual mode of speaking. 'How, I pray you, can that be? Yesterday I left the Prince of Desmond, and he did not expect the English troops for two or three weeks.' 'Yesterday,' echoed the English knight, in a tone of the greatest surprise and with a most puzzled look. 'Why, ten days ago, the Desmond besieged Limerick, and drove his rebellious son from that city. Since then, the young McCarthy has collected a strong force, and is advancing against his father. Raymond and Prince Desmond are now encamped before Limerick.'

"Marcus looked amazed; he thought a moment, and then courteously demanded of the knight the day of the week and the month.

"'By the mass, Sir Knight, you are pleased to banter,' replied the English leader; 'however, have at your humour. This is Tuesday; and, as to the month, it is September.' 'Good,'

muttered Marcus to himself; 'then I have just managed to sleep two months and a day —a very tolerable nap, all things considered; and now the second year is over, and one day remains. Sweet Nesta! thou shalt be mine; and this battleaxe,' and he suddenly raised it above his head, and swung it so powerfully and swiftly through the air, that the English knight reined in his steed, startled by the action of his strange companion. 'A thousand pardons, fair sir,' said Marcus, laughing; 'I was only trying if my arm, which I slightly hurt, had recovered its strength. But let us push on, Sir Knight, or we shall not reach the camp of McCarthy in time for the battle to-morrow.'

"With all the speed they could make, allowing an hour or two to refresh their steeds, the battle had just begun as they reached the brow of a steep hill, looking down upon the fine plain through which flowed the silver Shannon. In the distance, the spires and

towers and lofty battlements of Limerick were distinctly visible.

“ ‘ Ha, by the mass ! ’ shouted Marcus, ‘ they are begun, Sir Knight ! But we are yet in time to strike a blow for the great Desmond. So saying, he unslung his ponderous axe. ‘ Look ye, Sir Knight, yonder is the banner of the English leader. He seems hard pressed, for his banner wavers. Let us take that body of cavalry in the flank.’ Seizing his weighty lance, his axe being quite ready to the hand, Marcus put spurs to his fiery charger, and galloped down the hill, followed heartily by the English knight and his followers.

“ They arrived at a most critical moment ; for the English chieftain, hemmed in by a large number of Kerry horse and foot, and separated by some chance accident from the main body of his men, was left with only about a dozen of his own knights and a few spearmen. A gigantic chieftain, in a full suit of mail, and mounted on a powerful horse, armed with a

spiked mace, was rushing with a fierce shout upon Raymond. The English warrior, though no longer young, was a famous knight; but, at this trying moment, he was unhorsed. His death from the mace of the black knight appeared inevitable, when on came Marcus thundering through the press, overturning the spearmen like straws in his course, and, striking the black knight in the throat, hurled horse and man to the earth with a fearful shock. Dropping his splintered lance, Marcus seized his battle-axe, and clove the skull of a knight who held Raymond by the throat. With such power and skill did he use his terrible weapon, that he completely freed Raymond from the press, and, having dismounted, raised him up from the ground. By this time a large body of the McCarthy horse was seen coming to the rescue.

“ During the conflict, Raymond beheld the achievements of his deliverer with amazement; but when Marcus raised him from the ground,

and threw up the visor of his casque, and disclosed his flushed, but handsome features, the English chieftain groaned aloud, exclaiming in a startled voice—‘Has the grave given up its dead?’ Just then, Marcus’s companion of the road came up, hastily ejaculating, ‘Dear father, this gallant knight has saved us both!’ For, in the *méléc* Marcus had struck down a Kerry chief who proved to be an overmatch for his comrade of the morning. ‘Who, then,’ demanded Raymond, ‘is this knight, whom I have to thank, not only for my own life, but for that of my son? You bear, Sir Knight, the crest of one long since dead. Say who you are.’ And Raymond gazed anxiously in the young chief’s face.

“Drawing himself up to his full height, and speaking in a clear, firm tone, the young man said—

“‘I am Marcus O’Malachlin, the son of him, oh! Raymond, whom you caused to be put to

death; and whose wife and children perished in the flames of his castle."

"These words fell from the lips of Marcus without his having the power to check their utterance—they seemed to be forced from him by some supernatural agency. He, himself, was as much astonished at his own involuntary speech, as were the men who had gathered around him. McCarthy was amongst the rest, and gazed from Marcus to Raymond with a gesture of intense surprise. The English chieftain looked pale and agitated, but made no remark; while some of the knights present raised the black warrior whom Marcus had overthrown. On taking off his casque, they beheld McCarthy's rebellious son. He was not mortally wounded; and, the battle being ended by his fall—for his adherents, considering him slain, dispersed and fled in all directions—he was carried off the field by order of his sire.

“Raymond, with the Prince of Desmond, Marcus O’Malachlin, and the other chiefs, returned to Desmond Castle; then Nesta heard the joyous news, that the piper of Lough Derg was transformed into Prince Marcus O’Malachlin—and acknowledged by Raymond and her father, as the son of the unfortunate prince slain by Raymond’s orders. A messenger was sent to the peasants who reared him; and, when they were examined, they shewed the bracelet, and told how Marcus’s nurse had died, declaring the child she left with them to be the son of the unfortunate O’Malachlin. Nesta also heard that her lover had saved the great Raymond’s life; and, by overthrowing the gigantic son of McCarthy, gained the famous battle of Limerick. A great feast was held at Desmond Castle, and harpers and pipers from all parts of Ireland, were present, making the great hall ring with their martial and exultant melodies.

“After the feast, Raymond stood up, and,

in the most courteous manner, addressing Marcus, requested he would favour the princes and nobles present with an air from his marvellous pipes. Marcus rose to his feet, and returned a graceful reply to the English chief. Then, casting a look at the beautiful and blushing Nesta, he took from the hand of his page the magnificent pipes given to him by the fairies; breathing into the instrument, the vast hall resounded with the glorious march of Brian Boru at the battle of Clontarf. Marcus's noble figure, and gorgeous dress, prepared for the occasion, struck the assembly with admiration. But when the grand, but mournful, notes of the battle-song died away, a wild burst of enthusiastic applause shook the hall to its foundations. Again sounded the music of his pipes; and then a strain, never before heard by mortal ears, entranced the company. But no sooner had the fairy-melody ceased, than a loud and mournful wail reverberated through the vast

hall. Every person present heard it, and looked with awe at his neighbour. This was followed by a mighty crash, and the splendid pipes which Marcus held in his hands, fell into innumerable fragments. A strong gust of wind rushed through the hall, shaking violently the many banners that hung from the pillars. The fragments of the pipes were gathered together; and, amid a long, low wail, as of many voices, they were borne away through the great doors. A solemn and dead silence ensued.

“At length was heard the bold, clear voice of Marcus, as, standing erect, he addressed the astonished assembly—

“‘Countrymen, and you, my English friends, hear me. The piper of Lough Derg has, from this moment, ceased to exist. In his place stands Marcus O’Malachlin—a true lover of his country, and a friend to our English allies, as long as they have the welfare of Ireland at heart.’

“A wild, but heartfelt, shout of the Prince

of Meath and the Isle of the west, made the old hall vibrate. Then McCarthy stood up, and taking the blushing Nesta by the hand, he said, while a reverential silence was preserved by all around—

“‘Son of a great, but unfortunate prince ; you have won the prize you sought. Here is my daughter’s hand ; and, with her, take, as her dowry, the tract of land in Kerry, extending from —— to —— ; and, in future, bear the name of Fitzmaurice, instead of the unfortunate one of O’Malachlin.’

“Marcus, entranced, kissed the beautiful hand he so eagerly took—and which was so willingly given—declaring aloud, he never wished for aught but the true heart and lovely hand he had won.

“‘And I,’ said Raymond, rising, after the shouts of joy and congratulation had subsided, and addressing Marcus, “in gratitude to the preserver of my life, and that of my son, and, in remembrance of your gallantry, give up my

land in Desmond, including the two lordships of Kenmare and Tralee, to you and your heirs for ever.'

" Marcus Fitzmaurice thus became the founder of a noble race: his daughter married the son of Raymond's youngest son, Maurice, to whom was also granted lands in Kerry. The great McCarthy sullied his name by beheading his rebellious son. We must not forget to mention that Marcus, after his marriage with Nesta McCarthy, caused his foster-brothers and their parents to be placed in a comfortable home, with a tract of land to them and their heirs for ever.

" Thus ends The Adventures of the Piper of Lough Derg, in which a few historical facts are strangely mingled with fairy lore, and confused and jumbled together in the lapse of centuries. But as far as I have been able to ascertain the basis of this legend, I can clearly make out that an Irish Prince, named O'Malachlin, was hanged by Raymond; that one

son escaped the fate of his family; and that McCarthy, after beheading his own son, bestowed his lands in Kerry on Raymond's son, who really took the name of Fitzmaurice.

CHAPTER X.

HAVING finished his legend, Mr. Fitzpatrick received the thanks and praises of his fair companions.

“But recollect, my dear young lady,” observed Mr. Fitzpatrick, “you have your Legend of a Lake to give me in return. Before you commence, let me point out to you all the beauties of this glorious lake. Those grand and towering heights are the Arra Mountains, Slieve Boughty and Slant Ber-

nagh, stretching their vast arms far out into the lake."

"And those islands," remarked Aleen, "how beautiful and green they look! I dare say they have very romantic names."

"I lament to destroy your delusion," said Mr. Fitzpatrick, with a smile. "This, for instance, which we are now passing, is Crow Island; the further is Cow Island; and another is Hare Island. But the most remarkable of the lot is—Innis Caltra."

"Oh, that sounds infinitely better," said Mrs. Atherstone, "Is not that the island on which stands the seven churches?"

"The same, dear madam. But, as Innis Caltra lies within a few miles of my residence, we shall have plenty of time to visit it. And now I claim you promise, fair lady. I am longing to hear your legend of a foreign lake."

"You shall have it, my dear sir," replied Aleen; "but I cannot promise you any fairy

lore in it. We were caught, in an excursion on the Lago Maggiore, during a thunder storm, and sought shelter in an old building called the Tower of Sforza, situated on a little island called Pescatore. We were not long there, however, before a gentleman of middle age entered the tower, and politely requested us to take shelter in his villa, a little further up the island. To shorten my preface, we accepted the Count de Ricci's invitation, for it turned out a tempestuous night. His lady was a most kind and courteous dame ; and, to pass some of the hours of a dull evening, she related to us a legend of the old tower, as it was handed down by tradition. Of their ancestor, the Count de Ricci (one of the principal personages in the tale), a portrait was shown us, said to be the only one saved from the old picture gallery of the fortress, that once stood upon the main land just opposite the little island.

“I will now give you my legend, which I shall call BIANCA, or SFORZA'S TOWER.

“During the rule of that cruel and heartless tyrant, Filippo-Maria Visconti Duke of Milan, there dwelt upon the borders of Lago Maggiore a Milanese nobleman, named Ludovico Count de Ricci. He was at this time a widower, with an only daughter, just seventeen years old, of exceeding beauty, and, for the period she lived in, singularly accomplished ; that is, she could read and write, play upon the harp, and was said to be fond of the study of astrology and botany.

“The Count de Ricci was in his sixty-fifth year, but still hale and vigorous. Having been a great warrior in his youth, he grew stern and rigorous in his old age ; and, notwithstanding his great revenues, he was somewhat parsimonious. He shut himself up, with his young and lovely daughter, in his feudal fortress, where he kept only a few retainers, neither receiving nor visiting the neighbours in his vicinity. Still his daughter was grati-

fied in every wish of her heart ; for the stern old Count dearly loved her.

“ The Castle enjoyed a most glorious view over the wide expanse of Lago Maggiore and its lovely Islands, and also the beautiful country surrounding Bavino. It may be thought that Bianca led but a joyless life, shut up in the old Castle, with no other amusements than strolling through the extensive gardens into the great picture-gallery, and the magnificent armoury, where hung armour of all sorts : chain armour and plate armour ; helmets like eagles and griffins ; with wonderfully curious visors, which often puzzled the fair girl, when looking at them, to conceive how the bearers contrived to breath or exist with such a load of ugly iron on their heads ; to say nothing of all which encumbered their bodies.

“ Though Bianca acquired the credit of being an adept in astrology, and botany, she knew scarcely anything of those sciences. She

loved dearly to gaze into the clear vault of Heaven, when the stars sparkled brightly, or when the moon shone, to view, from one of the castle turrets, the lunar beams resting upon the Islands that lay tranquil and still, with the clear water rippling on their shores. Then, with her favorite maiden, Lucia, she wandered amid the exquisite scenery that surrounded her abode; and gathered the innumerable wild flowers and plants which abounded in that favoured region. The castle of the Count de Ricci, was within a league of Baveno, surrounded by fields of maze, mulberry, and chesnut trees, the net vine climbing and twisting itself amid the boughs of the loftiest trees. The air of this delightful country was mild and balmy, and the scent of sweet flowers filled it with fragrance. Even in winter, when the hills, covered with snow, present an aspect somewhat cheerless, the eye rests with delight upon the Borromeo Isles, which seem to retain perpetual verdure and beauty. At the period of our tale,

however these Islands remained almost in the state in which nature created them. To the Count Vitaliano Borromeo, they owe their magnificent gardens, terraces, and pavilions.

“ On one of those Islands, the most barren of the three, and called the Island of Fishers, the old Count de Ricci had built a lofty Tower ; and his daughter Bianca, who loved to spend some of the summer days there, had it tastefully fitted up with several apartments, and a large garden surrounding it. There she frequently retired during the heats of summer, with her two female attendants, and the old gardener and his son, and remained there for weeks. At that period there were no inhabitants. Now it contains near two hundred and a church, though the buildings offer a strange, but not unpleasing, contrast to the magnificence of Isola Bella.

“ The old Count de Ricci was highly connected ; and at one time lived in great splendour at the Court of the ferocious and blood-

thirsty tyrant, Giovanni-Maria. The Countess dœ Ricci was the sister of the unfortunate wife of this tyrant duke; who, in the end, was assassinated by some of the nobles; and, to the surprise of the court, and the indignation of most of the nobility, his widow, Beatrice Tenda, married immediately after, his successor, Filippo-Maria. Somewhat disgusted, the Count de Ricci retired from court, and lived in the seclusion of his castle, refusing the new duke his request that he would reside in Milan.

“It was the month of June, and Bianca Ricci crossed over to the Island of Fishers, with her usual attendants, and took up her abode in the tower, intending to spend some weeks there. For the period she lived in, she had a choice collection of manuscripts. She was fond of painting, and painted well. She had a handsome barge, for recreation on the lake; a beautiful garden to walk in, and musical instruments to play upon. Alto-

gether, the fair Bianca seemed to want nothing on earth to make her happy. Yet she felt not in her usual spirits. She had left her father somewhat disturbed and uneasy at intelligence from Milan. Filippo Maria, though by no means a warlike prince, was, nevertheless, a keen observer ; and, from the moment he became Duke, he resolved to augment his territories, by no means scrupulous as to the means. The famous Francesco Carmagnola, from a simple cuirassier had become one of the greatest captains in Italy. One by one, all the petty tyrants of Lombardy were conquered by him. As he gained power, the Duke increased in wickedness and tyranny, and committed many acts fully as bad as his ferocious predecessor. From his wife, though she was nearly twenty years older than himself, he gained his throne ; but once firmly seated, he determined to get rid of her. Having a presentiment of her fate, she despatched a courier to the Count de Ricci, requesting him to come to Milan, as she

feared the Duke had designs against her fair name, if not her life. The Count, therefore, resolved to go, for a time, to Milan, shortly after his daughter's departure for the Tower of Fishers. He left his castle, with a dozen or so of armed retainers, and proceeded to Milan; for he was greatly attached to his late wife's sister, and he hoped to be of some assistance to her, in shielding her from the designs of her tyranical husband, intending to form a strong party amongst the old nobility.

“The Lady Bianca passed a fortnight in perfect tranquillity on the little Island of Pescatore; but, at the end of that period, she began to wonder that no tidings reached her of her father's proceedings, and she felt considerable uneasiness about the Duchess, whom she remembered, when a little girl, to have been very fond of her.

“One very fine and tranquil evening, just a half hour before sunset, Bianca was seated at the open window of her favorite chamber in

the tower, looking out upon the glassy surface of the lake, undisturbed by the slightest breath of air. As the sun reached the horizon, the vast body of water resembled a sheet of gold. Just then her attention was caught by the appearance of two boats rowing rapidly across the lake. Presently, she perceived the leading one turn its prow for the Island of Fishers ; and, as it came nearer, she could see distinctly that it was impelled over the water by one man. It was an extremely light, buoyant skiff ; and, being vigorously pulled, went swiftly over the smooth surface of the lake. Nevertheless, the other boat, a long galley-kind of craft, came even more rapidly onwards, and it became very evident to Bianca, that the last boat pursued the first. Her attention thus became excited ; and, calling her maid Lucia, they both anxiously watched the progress of the boats. The Galley was pulled by four oarsmen ; and in her stern stood two men, both in armour, for the last rays of

the sun fell upon their steel harness, which sparkled glaringly in the eyes of the two maidens. As the skiff approached, the Count's daughter could plainly perceive that the person who rowed was evidently a young Signor, for he wore a plumed cap, and his attire was such as a gentleman of rank might wear. He appeared as if he pulled for his life; and those who pursued, seemed as if they thirsted for his blood, for fierce oaths and violent execrations burst from the lips of the two figures in armour in the galley, exciting the four men to pull with might and main and prevent the fugitive from landing on the Island of Fishers.

Bianca no sooner heard the words of the men in the barge, than she said to Lucia—“Run, girl, and call old Tomaso and his son. Tell them to go quickly to the beach, or blood will be shed.” And, snatching up her mantle and hood, she hurried from the chamber, with the intention of preventing, if she could,

an assassination under the very walls of the Tower. On gaining the open door of the edifice, Bianca saw Lucia and the old gardener come hurrying from the garden at the back. The gardener looked pale and much frightened as Lucia had told him that a murder would be perpetrated on the beach before the Tower. Heedless of the old man's representations that she was running into danger, Bianca flew towards the beach, and beheld a sight that, for an instant, caused her cheek to blanch and her heart to beat with horror. The young Signor in the skiff had leaped ashore as soon as his boat touched the beach, and was instantly followed by the two armed men in the barge ; for when Bianca looked towards the lake, she perceived the three figures engaged with swords ; and the same instant one of the men cased in steel staggered and fell ; while the other, before the youth could recover his sword, ran his weapon right through his unarmed breast.

The youth fell backwards as if slain. A wild shriek escaped the lips of Lucia as Bianca rushed towards the spot, calling out in loud tones on the assassins to beware how they committed murder on the lands of the Count de Ricci. Two men now jumped from the barge; and before the Count's daughter reached the spot, they lifted the wounded man in armour into the boat; the other man sprang in, and the next instant they pulled rapidly out into the lake, rowing in the direction of Isola Bella.

"Greatly agitated at the scene she had witnessed, Bianca, followed by her maiden and the trembling gardener and his son, reached the beach where lay the stranger to all appearance dead. By his side lay his broken sword. Had it not broken, he would probably have defeated his antagonists; for he was a tall and powerful young man of scarcely more than twenty-five years of age.

"'Merciful Heaven!' ejaculated Bianca,

'I fear he is slain! What can be done?' And kneeling down, she perceived the blood flowing copiously from a wound in the right breast. But he was not dead; for after a moment, Lucia called out—

" 'Dear mistress, he breathes!'

" 'Ha, thanks be to Heaven!' cried the Count's daughter. 'Do you, Marco, (speaking to the stupified gardener's son) take the skiff, row to the Castle, and bring back old Jerome. He is a skilful leech. Bring with you, also, two of the men well armed, for fear these assassins should return.'

" The Lady Bianca, though only seventeen years of age, was, nevertheless, a courageous and high-spirited maiden, possessing considerable presence of mind, and a most generous and amiable disposition. " With Lucia's assistance she staunched the blood; but the stranger, though they bathed his temples with all kinds of restoratives in their possession, still remained quite senseless. He neverthe-

less breathed somewhat stronger. How to get him to the Tower, puzzled them all; for he was much too heavy for old Tomaso, even with their assistance, and night was rapidly coming on. However, Bianca insisted upon trying to move him, even if it were only to the shelter of the boat-house, which was close beside the spot. Though pale as death, and his eyes closed, yet it was easy to perceive that the stranger was eminently handsome, and his attire rich. The sword he had broken had a jewelled hilt, but was more an ornamental, than a serviceable weapon.

“With great difficulty the fair girl and her assistants drew the stranger within the shed, during which operation he groaned several times. Having laid him upon some sails, a little wine was poured down his throat. Lucia had procured a lamp; and, in a very short time, to Bianca’s infinite relief, the stranger opened his eyes very feebly, and almost im-

mediately reclosed them. The castle was little more than two miles from the tower; therefore, as the water was smooth, and the skiff light, Marco, in little more than an hour, returned with the leech, and two of the castle retainers. The stranger was then carried into the tower, and consigned to the care of the leech and the kind-hearted old dame, who superintended the culinary department. Bianca then retired to her chamber to converse with Lucila upon the strange adventure of the evening.

“To say that the fair Bianca felt no curiosity concerning the handsome stranger, would be unnatural even in this unromantic age. But at that period, when chivalry had not totally perished, and when maidens of rank thought it not beneath their dignity to attend to the sufferings of wounded knights—such an event as that which had occurred before her own eyes, was sure not only to excite her curiosity, but strongly awaken her sympathy for the sufferer.

“Three days passed over; and still the stranger’s condition did not warrant any very strong hope that he would survive the terrible sword-thrust he had received. But on the fourth and fifth day, he got visibly better, Bianca, herself, attending to the administration of the remedies prescribed.

“At the end of a week, he was able to converse; and Bianca was informed by the old dame who principally attended to his wants, that he earnestly implored an interview with her. He had left his couch, and was sitting in an easy chair, propped with pillows. When Bianca heard this request, her heart beat somewhat quicker. She rose, and, followed by the old dame, proceeded to the chamber of the invalid, in one of the lower rooms of the tower.

“As she entered the apartment, with a little more colour in her cheek than usual, the stranger made an effort to rise, but grew deadly pale from the exertion; and the maiden,

seeing his languid look, stepped forward, and holding out her hand, as if to stay any further effort, said, in her melodious voice—

“ ‘ I pray you keep your chair. You are not yet able for any exertion.’

“ The stranger took the hand held out before she could withdraw it, and, most humbly and respectfully, and with something of deep devotion in the manner, kissed it, saying—

“ ‘ Ah, lady, you have been a ministering angel to me. A life’s service cannot repay your gift to me of life. Yet, cruel fate ! from me, you must receive tidings that will pain your heart.’

“ Bianca’s cheek grew pale, as, sinking into a seat, she exclaimed—

“ ‘ Evil tidings ! my father ! Can you know anything of him ? My connections are so few, that evil tidings must relate to him.’

“ ‘ Alas !’ replied the stranger, ‘ such is the case ! But be not alarmed more than is needful ; for my tidings affect not his life.’

“‘Good Heavens! Then what has happened? my dear father! And how came you, a stranger, to know of his misfortune, for such, I suppose, your tidings mean?’

“‘Misfortune, dear lady, it certainly is. But not to keep you in suspense, let me state that the object of your father in coming to Milan, was to serve that cruelly-injured lady, the Duchess.’

“‘Holy Virgin, my aunt!’ responded Bianca. ‘What has occurred to her?’

“‘Your aunt!’ echoed the stranger, in a low voice, and, looking extremely dejected. ‘I did not know the Duchess was your aunt. Worse and worse!’ Then looking up into the agitated maiden’s face, he added—‘Your father, dear lady, immediately on reaching Milan, was seized with all his attendants, and, by order of Filippo-Maria, imprisoned in the fortress of Camagna, in order that he might not interfere with his cruel and frightful designs upon the life of his Duchess.’

“ ‘ Ah, Madonna ! ’ cried Bianca, ‘ I felt it. Something of evil hung upon my spirits all this last month—I felt an unaccountable depression. My poor father, in his old age, a prisoner ! Alas ! the tyrant may take his life ! ’

“ ‘ No, lady, no,’ said the stranger. ‘ The Duke will never injure the Count de Ricci. The deed for which he imprisoned him—’ he paused, hesitated, and then added, in a low, mournful voice—‘ is done ! He will be liberated shortly.’

“ ‘ What deed is done ? ’ demanded the maiden, nerving herself to hear the worst, and fixing her eyes upon the stranger. ‘ Keep me not, I pray you, in suspense. What of my aunt ? ’

“ ‘ Alas, lady ! ’ replied the stranger, ‘ the Duchess is no more ! She was cruelly put to death by her tyrant husband. As she was many years older than himself, he sought some excuse to get rid of her, who, in fact, had

raised him to the Ducal Throne. I will not pain you, dear lady, by relating the details of this execrable murder; for, by my knightly faith, the accusation against the Duchess was a false one. Others suffered also; one, the dearest friend of my boyhood, perished miserably tortured; and I barely escaped the same doom, for daring to proclaim them both guiltless, and offering to combat to the death their accuser. For a time, I took refuge with Sir Gian Beltrato, near Baveno. As I was returning one evening from Isola Bella in a light skiff, I was tracked by four assassins, who had discovered my residence. I thought to escape their galley, pulled only by a couple of boatmen; but two of the armed assassins stripped, and applied themselves to the oar, and I soon saw that escape was impossible. I turned my boat by a blessed chance, for this Island—my small, light sword broke against the steel harness of one of the assassins. The other ran me through the body; and, but for you, dear

lady, the days of Francesco Sforza, had ended ere this.'

" 'Francesco Sforza !' echoed Bianca, in a tone of the greatest surprise ; for already had the achievements of Francesco created wonder and applause in the kingdoms of Italy. But Bianca's thoughts were too full of her father's misfortune, and her aunt's miserable fate, to think of aught else, much as she was surprised by learning who the wounded knight was.

" After a pause, she looked up, exclaiming—

" 'Merciful Heaven ! what am I to do to assist my poor father ?'

" 'Listen to me, lady,' responded Francesco ; ' I will, with the blessing of God, release your father, if he is not liberated in a week or so. My wound is getting rapidly well ; and my faithful followers are marching into Lombardy from Tuscany. You have heard, doubtless, how the year before this I lost my gallant father. Alas ! he was drowned in crossing the little river of Pescara, trying to

save the life of a page. His weighty armour buried him beneath the flood.'

" 'I heard of his sad fate from my father,' said Bianca, timidly, 'and how his son Francesco, in that trying time, won the admiration of his father's followers, who all took the oath of fidelity to him. But what brought Francesco Sforza to the court of the Duke of Milan ?'

" And she fixed her eyes upon the Condottiere's pale but handsome features.

" 'I was brought up, dear lady, by your good and too generous aunt, and was page for a short time, to her ferocious first husband. At the time my poor father lost his life, we were marching to the *relief* of Aquila which was defended by the famous Braccio De Montoni and his condottieri. It was predicted by an astrologer, some years ago, that rivers boded danger to the race of Sforza, and Braccio De Montoni, consulting the same astrologer, was informed

that he would survive his great rival but a short time. Startled by the sudden and lamentable fate of my father, Braccio, nevertheless prepared to encounter the troops of Joanna, Queen of Naples, and the Duke of Milan. My father's captains were bound to serve under the banners of Filippo Maria, and I, having accepted their oaths of fidelity, led them under his banner against my late father's rival. Braccio de Montoni was overwhelmed by the superior force brought against him, and was defeated, wounded and captured. His wound was not mortal ; nevertheless, his proud spirit rejected all aid ; he never uttered a word from the period of his capture ; refused all sustenance ; and died in three days.'

"The young captain paused ; and Bianca, seeing he was greatly fatigued by the exertion of speaking so much, insisted on his saying no more till the next day. When she would visit him again, and consult on the best means of

rescuing her father from the power of the duke.

“ Francesco Sforza sighed ; lamented the state of inactivity his wound forced him to remain in, kissed the hand extended to him, in bidding him good night ; and, as the door closed upon the figure of the Count’s daughter, he mentally vowed he would win the fair Bianca’s love, or carry her image in his heart till death.

“ And what were the maiden’s ruminations as she retired to her chamber ? Mingled with thoughts of her father’s captivity, and the miserable fate of her aunt, the image of the gallant Francesco, already one of the greatest commanders in Italy—the favorite leader of the Neapolitan Queen, and possessor of considerable fiefs and lordships, made a deep impression on the maiden’s heart, and occupied no inconsiderable share of her contemplations. What would her proud, though fond father think, if he imagined she had bestowed her

love upon the son of a peasant? For it was known that Giacomo Sforza, Francesco's father, was a peasant of Cotignola in Romagna. But Bianca little imagined the grandeur to which Francesco Sforza was destined to rise."

CHAPTER X.

ALEEN paused awhile, and then resumed her narrative, as follows:—

“ June had gone by, and so had the third part of the sultry month of July, with its intense blue firmament, without a cloud to check the ardent rays of a scorching sun.

“ Totally heedless of the heat—a splendid body of horse was traversing the country between Lodi and Milano. The men were cased from head to heel, in the ponderous plate

armour used at that period ; even their steeds had to bear their load of iron panoply. They made a dazzling appearance, for no troops then in Italy were so gallantly and magnificently armed and mounted as the cavalry under the renowned Francesco Sforza.

“At the head of the troop, which amounted to nearly six hundred men, rode two cavaliers ; one only, however, cased in mail. This cavalier wore a singularly magnificent suit of Milan steel richly edged with gold, and beautifully embossed and engraved. Golden spurs graced his heels ; and a lofty crimson plume added to his already great stature. His steed was glossy black, large-boned, fiery, and quite capable of the rider’s great weight. The visor of this knight was up, disclosing the handsome and manly features of Francesco Sforza. His companion, although not cased in complete mail, was a powerful man of middle age—well armed in cuirass and salade, with a heavy lance in its

rest, and a ponderous mace at his saddle bow. This cavalier was Sforza's famous captain, Nicolo Borso.

“Though perhaps a little paler than usual, Francesco Sforza was completely cured of his desperate wound. Before his departure from the old Tower on the Island of Fishers, Sforza and Bianca De Ricci became lovers, and plighted their faith and troth to each other with all the devotion and fervour of young hearts loving for the first time. Before his departure from the tower, Sforza explained to Bianca how he came to be in Milan at the period of her father's incarceration. The Duke owed his father large sums of money for services at various periods. This money he refused to pay unless the son bound himself to his service alone.

“Leaving his forces in Romagna, Sforza visited Milan. Disgusted by the cruelty exercised towards the Duchess and the companion of his boyhood, Sforza defied the Duke to prove

their guilt, offering, according to the custom of the times, to fight to the death their accuser. The Duke resolved to rid himself of so bold a champion; but Sforza, warned in time, left Milan. Assassins, nevertheless, tracked his steps; and he would have fallen a victim but for Bianca.

“ Francesco was now on his way to the fortress where the Count de Ricci was confined; resolved to take it by storm; and then, with his whole force—which amounted to near four thousand men, horse and foot—approach Milan and demand a settlement of his claims from the Duke. If he refused, he would threaten to join his force to that of Nicolo Picinino—the ablest of Braccio de Montoni’s captains, who was then collecting the scattered forces of his late leader.

“ Though generous, high-spirited, and far superior, in many respects, to the great leaders of condottieri then existing throughout Italy, and even fond of cultivating his mind, at

times, by study, Francesco Sforza was ambitious of military distinction and renown. Aware that he must find money for his troops, and conciliate his captains by the highest amount of pay offered by crowned heads to fight their battles, he would, notwithstanding the baseness and perfidy of Filippo Maria, enter his service if he liquidated his claims, and restored to the Count de Ricci his possessions—for the Duke had already seized upon his fiefs, on the plea that, some months before, he had sent a body of retainers to the aid of the Lord of Lodi—whom the Duke inveigled to Milan, and afterwards executed both him and his son. He served one of the Becconia the same way—and the ruler of Como would have shared a similar fate had he not submitted. The Duke had long wished for some excuse to seize upon the territory and wealth of the Count de Ricci; but his relationship to his Duchess, and his giving no cause of offence, were obstructions not easily got over. At

length, his arming his retainers to aid the Signor of Lodi, and his fierce remonstrance against the Duke's treatment of his Duchess, gave him the opportunity he desired. He imprisoned the old Count, and seized his possessions, leaving his daughter, Bianca, the Island of Fishers, and a small pension to live upon. But, in her lover, Bianca had a powerful supporter.

"The Duke considered that Sforza was slain by his emissaries. His amazement and disgust were, therefore, great when he learned that Francesco Sforza was not only alive, but had joined his bands in the vicinity of Lodi. What his purpose was, he could only conjecture.

"In the meantime, Sforza, with his four thousand cuirassiers, advanced against the strong fortress of Pizzighitone; followed by four hundred of his foot soldiers, and four large bombards—a formidable cannon for those days. Pizzighitone, built upon the banks of the Serio, —close to its confluence with the Adda—was

considered one of the strongest fortresses belonging to the Duke. In after years it became celebrated as the prison of Francis the First, after the battle of Pavia. Nevertheless, Francesco Sforza took it by assault in four days, before the troops sent by Filippo Maria to its relief could reach it.

“After this exploit, Sforza, with the old Count de Ricci—released from captivity—under his protection, retired with his band; and, passing Cremona, encamped in a strong position; and then commenced negotiations with the enraged Duke of Milan.

“While these were pending, the old Count became extremely anxious to see his daughter; and Francesco Sforza was equally so. Accordingly, they both agreed, vested in plain armour, and attended only by a couple of squires, to ride to Lago Maggiore, and the Island of Fishers. Leaving the camp early one morning, in the month of August, and avoiding Cre-

mona, they traversed a part of the country where they were not likely to be recognised.

“ As they rode side by side, Francesco perceived that the old Count de Ricci was extremely gloomy and abstracted in his manner. He was aware that his deliverer from captivity owed his life to his daughter’s care; though not one word of their mutual love had been communicated to the Count by Sforza. But as they rode along, Francesco determined to reveal the truth.

“ ‘ Count de Ricci,’ said he, ‘ I beg you will listen to what I have to say, with patience and temper. Your daughter saved my life. I released you from captivity. Still, I am your daughter’s debtor, and would willingly offer my life to do her a service.’

“ ‘ You have proved that,’ returned the Count, drily, ‘ on the battlements of Pizzighitone. But go on.’

“ ‘ Well, Count de Ricci,’ resumed Sforza, in a firm tone; ‘ I love your daughter !’

“ ‘ Precisely what I knew would be the case, when you told me she saved your life. Benissimo ! What next ? ’ returned the stern old warrior, in the same tone ; his features shewing no trace of displeasure or otherwise.’

“ Francesco Sforza was aware of the old man’s character, from his daughter Bianca, therefore, he replied, quietly—

“ ‘ We have plighted our troth, Count de Ricci ; and humbly hope you will sanction our affection ; and, accept me, unworthy as I am, as your future son-in-law.’

“ ‘ Humph ! ’ muttered the Count. ‘ These are strange times, when a peasant’s son aspires to the hand of one who has royal blood in her veins.’

“ ‘ True,’ replied Francesco, calmly ; but that peasant made crowned heads tremble ; and won a principality by his gallant deeds. And, by this good sword,’ and he laid his hand upon the weighty one he wore, ‘ I will win a crown to offer to Bianca yet ! ’

“ ‘ If gallantry and doughty deeds can win a crown, you certainly have a fair chance, Francesco Sforza,’ said the Count, in a kinder tone. ‘ I am an old man,’ he continued, ‘ and cannot expect to hold on much longer. I love a brave and enterprising character ; but I certainly looked for a higher alliance for my daughter, than the leader of a Condottieri troop, even though that leader is Francesco Sforza. But fate will not be controlled. I am considered a stern, hard man ; and many add the word miser to my titles. I like you. You have dared to dispute the will of the tyrant, to serve me ; and I am not ungrateful. But before we speak further on this subject, let us reach our destination. I have a secret that has been confined to my breast these fourteen years. I will confide it to you. We shall then see how affairs will stand ; but, depend upon it, your bold surprisal of the fortress of Pizzighitone will convulse the Duke with rage. You must either serve him, and place your troops

in his pay, or evacuate his territories without delay. Now let us on.'

"The evening of the second day, the Count and Sforza reached the shores of Lago Maggiore, near the town of Arona. A small hamlet of fishermen was within half a league of them ; and there they stopped in preference to entering Arona, which was a fortified place, and garrisoned by the Duke's soldiers. A boat was soon procured ; and the wind being favorable, the Count and his companion sailed, without attendants, for the Island of Fishers. It was scarcely more than two hours' sail ; and just as the sun closed his labours for the day, they reached the Island. Francesco Sforza felt his heart beat with an almost painful violence as he leaped on the beach, followed more slowly and cautiously by the old Count. No human being was to be seen. The lofty tower rose grandly against the clear sky, in the fading light of evening ; but no sound met the ear—all was still and tranquil, as if no living

soul dwelt upon the Island. Francesco Sforza felt strangely; but he advanced with a quick step to the great gate of the tower: it was wide open: he called aloud: there was no return to his summons. The tower was totally deserted. No living being inhabited it."

"I have now," said Aleen, "arrived at a main point of the narrative, and will rest a

moment."

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER a brief interval, Miss Atherstone resumed her story in these words—

“ The Royal Palace of Milan, built by Azzo Visconti in the century preceding the events I have narrated, was a magnificent structure, of which little remains, if we except the Church of San Gotardo, which is included in the present Palazzo Imperiale as its chapel, and Azzo’s tower, which still exists, a remarkably curious specimen of antiquity. Its construction is a mixture of Norman and Lombard, or

the Cinque-cento style, one truly national. On its summit is the statue of an angel in brass-gilt, of which a curious legend is told.

“One of the earlier artillerymen, called a bombardier, being condemned to death, proposed to knock off the head of the statue the first shot, if his life would be spared ; he did so, and purchased his life. Whether this story is true or not—at the period of our tale the statue was without a head. At the time Filippo-Maria ruled in Milan, this tower was used occasionally as a place of temporary confinement for petty offences by any of the officers of the court. Some of the chambers were large and lofty—and the upper ones enjoyed a most unrivalled view over the city, and the adjacent plains, to the not very distant range of Alps.

“In one of these chambers, rather richly furnished, was a youthful female captive, seated at the open window, and gazing out from its dizzy height upon the snow-clad sum-

mits of the Alps. It was now the latter end of August, and the weather was still hot and oppressive. The captive was Bianca de Ricci. As yet, her captivity was easily borne, as four days only had elapsed since her occupation of the chamber in Azzo's tower. Tears were in the beautiful eyes of the maiden, as she gazed over the wonderful extent of country before her. The garden of Italy was beneath—plains teeming with the luxuries of human life, and watered by magnificent rivers, soon destined to be cut into numerous canals, so rapidly was the commerce of Milan increasing. Little thought the fair girl of the destiny that was before her; and though her meditations were fixed upon her absent lover, whom she scarcely expected ever to see again, little could she imagine that Francesco Sforza would hand his name down to posterity as the constructor of the first canal called the Martesano, a canal that employed the genius of the great Leonardo da Vinci to complete. The hum of the busy

population of Milan ascended to Bianca's ear, as she sat lonely and unthought-of amid thousands. The breeze, as it swept past, cooled her feverish cheek; and, wearied and miserable, she gave way to the unhappiness that oppressed her.

"One morning, after the departure of her lover to liberate her father, Bianca was walking in the shady garden, at the back of the tower of Fishers, when Lucia came hurrying towards her, saying, in rather a flurried manner, that a long galley, full of armed men, was approaching the Island. Very much surprised, though scarcely alarmed, Bianca entered the tower, looked out on the lake, and then perceived the galley close in with the shore of the Island. From the stern, floated a banner, which she at once recognized as the Ducal flag; she beheld several armed men, and one Signor richly attired, with a Spanish hat and rich plume.

"Extremely surprised, and beginning to

dread, she knew not what, she watched the Signor as he landed, and walked up towards the great gate of the tower, unattended by any of the other persons in the vessel. In a few moments, Lucia entered the room, and, in an agitated manner, announced that the Count Cusani requested an audience.

“‘Oh, Madonna!’ added the poor girl, ‘they are come to take you with them to Milano.’

Bianca grew pale, and her voice, for a moment, faltered, as she desired Lucia to shew the Count Cusani to the saloon, whither, in a few minutes, having recovered her firmness, she proceeded. The Count Cusani was an elderly man, of prepossessing appearance. On the entrance of Bianca, he rose and advanced towards her, saluting her according to the custom of the times, and leading her to a seat.

“‘It grieves me, lady,’ said the Count, ‘to be the bearer of unpleasant tidings. I am

ordered by his Highness, the Duke, to conduct you with all due respect to Milan. You are to be lodged in the Ducal Palace.'

"'An honour, my lord,' returned Bianca, 'I by no means covet. Might I request to know, if in your power to say, the reason of so unexpected a mandate?'

"'One reason, fair lady,' answered the Count, mildly, 'is the Duke wishes to hold the daughter of the Count de Ricci in his power, as her father has been released from captivity by the bands of the famous Condottieri leader, Francesco Sforza. And—'

"'Ah, Heaven be praised!' interrupted Bianca, her eyes sparkling, and her hands clasped, 'my dear old father is no longer a prisoner. The noble Sforza has kept his word.'

"The Count de Cusani looked grave; but said, in a kindly tone—

"'My dear young lady, our Duke is not exactly a person you can vent the trifle with.'

Whatever your sentiments may be, take an old courtier's advice ; keep them to yourself when before his Highness. Will you now get ready as soon as possible ? You may take a single female attendant with you, but no more. My orders are precise.'

"Bianca, quite aware that obedience was absolutely necessary, replied—

"I thank you sincerely, my lord, for your advice, and will be sure to follow it. I will not detain you long. In the meantime, be pleased to accept whatever refreshment my poor abode can afford.'

"The Count bowed ; and Bianca, with a firm step, though a beating heart, left the room.

"In less than an hour, the galley was under weigh for Cestio-Calende with Bianca, and her faithful Lucia, on board. The journey by land was performed in a close litter. Entering Milan, at night, Bianca was

conveyed to Azzo's tower, and there confined to a suite of three chambers.

On the seventh day of her captivity, the door of her sitting chamber opened, and, without any previous announcement, a senior, rather plainly attired, entered the room. Bianca at once surmised that her visitor was Filippo Maria, Duke of Milan. With a flushed cheek, and a beating heart, she rose from her chair, and stood for a moment scarcely knowing whether she ought to bend her knee to her Sovereign Prince, or let him imagine she knew not who he was. Before she had time to form a resolution, the Duke, with a strange expression on his gloomy, but handsome, features, advanced close to Bianca, saying, in a rather agitated tone—

“ ‘Are you the Count de Ricci’s daughter?’

“ ‘My Lord Duke,’ replied Bianca, surprised at the manner and question of Filippo Maria, ‘I am the Count de Ricci’s daughter, and would gladly know what offence I have com-

mitted, to cause my being taken from my home and confined in this tower.'

"'It's a strange likeness!' muttered the Duke in an abstracted manner. Throwing himself into a chair, he drew a gold-chain from his vest, to which was attached a miniature case, magnificently set with jewels. Touching a spring, the case opened; and then the Duke gazed intently on the picture within.

"'Strange freak of nature!' he muttered to himself. Then, looking up, he fixed his gaze upon the striking figure of Bianca de Ricci.

"'Come hither, maiden,' said the Duke. 'Look on this portrait. Did you ever behold a countenance like that?' And he held out the miniature to the astonished Bianca. With a timid step, she approached the Duke, and let her eyes rest on the miniature. The moment she did so, she started back with surprise; for, at the first glance, she actually thought she beheld herself. 'Ha!' ejaculated the Duke, 'you see it. By the blessed saints! there is some-

thing more in this resemblance than a mere chance likeness ! Say, how old are you, maiden ?

“ ‘Seventeen,’ returned Bianca, more and more surprised, and venturing to look the gloomy Prince in the face, as he replaced the picture in his vest.

“ ‘Seventeen ? good !’ muttered the Duke. And, letting his eyes rest on the floor, he seemed to fall into a reverie.

“ Filippo Maria was, at this period, about thirty-nine years of age. He was tall, large boned, and rather gaunt, with a high arched brow, and noble forehead. His dark, penetrating eyes were almost hidden when his heavy brow was lowered in thought. He wore no moustache ; and his beard, black as jet, was short and peaked. Gloomy and suspicious by nature, cruel and remorseless in disposition, he yet, now and then, performed a good and generous act. When he succeeded to the Ducal throne, his dominions only included

Milan and Pavia; but by treachery and deceit, together with the courage and abilities of the famous Francesco Carmagnola, he utterly rooted out the petty tyrants of Lombardy, and seized upon their possessions. Placenza, Lodi, Cremona, und Parma, all fell under his sway; and, at this period of his reign, his dominions were extensive, and his power great; but he had no children to inherit his sovereignty.

“ When Count of Pavia, and while his elder brother, the ferocious Giovanni Maria, was Lord of Milan, Filippo became devotedly attached to the daughter of a wealthy citizen of Pavia, who returned his affection, unfortunately without knowing his name or rank. Too proud and ambitious to marry the fair daughter of a jeweller, he persuaded her to leave her home, and, after disclosing his name and rank, placed her in a castle he possessed near Binasco. He was passionately attached to the unfortunate girl, who died the second year of their union in giving birth to a daughter. Filippo Maria was

distracted at his loss. At that time, the Count de Ricci was his bosom friend, and just married. He confided his daughter to the Count's care, who took her to his castle on the Lago Maggiore. The death of the tyrant of Milan, some years after, convulsed the whole of Lombardy ; and Filippo though entirely devoted to his ambitious projects, received the news of his daughter's death from the Count de Ricci, with a gloomy despondency that, for a time, rendered him even more savage and remorseless than before. He now took a violent dislike to the Count ; and, when Lord of Milan, by marrying the widow of his brother, and the sister of the Count de Ricci's wife, in so hurried and indecent a haste, he so disgusted the Count that he quitted the court altogether ; and being a widower with an only daughter, fell into eccentric habits, living completely retired from the world.

“ After this digression, let us return to Azzo's Tower, where we left the Duke and the

Count's daughter. Filippo remained for some time in deep thought upon the past; while Bianca herself, struck by his questions, and some recollections of her own, remained in a painful state of suspense as to the result of her interview with the Duke. At length, Filippo Maria looked up, and the expression of his almost always gloomy features was changed: he looked kindly, if not affectionately, at Bianca, saying, as he rose to his feet, and took her hand—

“ ‘ Be of good heart, maiden. No harm will come to you here. But be not surprised if you lose one father to find another.’ And without a word more, the Duke left the chamber, Bianca remaining bewildered, if not startled, by the strange words of the ruler of Milan.

“ Filippo Maria had scarcely regained the ducal apartments, when one of his personal attendants, a nobleman of considerable influence and wealth, entered the saloon, saying—

“ ‘ My Lord Duke, the very persons you were speaking of this morning, are actually at this moment in the palace, and request an audience of your Highness.’

“ ‘ What !’ exclaimed the Duke, with a fierce scowl, ‘ what ! the traitor Sforza and the Count De Ricci. This audacity and insolence exceeds belief. I mean as respects this Condottieri leader’s conduct, after daring to assault a state fortress, and release a prisoner I had particular reasons for retaining captive. Arrest them both, Marchese. We will teach this bold Condottiere a lesson he has not yet learnt.’

“ ‘ Pardon me, your Highness,’ returned the Marchese Rinaldo, ‘ if I venture to request you will restrain, for a time, your just resentment against Francesco Sforza. His troops, amounting to above four thousand men, adore their leader. Before your levies could possibly prevent them, this desperate and determined body of men would, in revenge, ravage and

lay waste the whole of Lombardy. Before entering this territory, Francesco, as you know, made a rapid conquest of the March of Ancona and other territories. The Pope, I have heard, has confirmed him in his possession of the March, as a fief of the holy see; and it is even rumoured that Sforza intends to establish himself as an independent Prince. His gendarmerie are accounted a most brilliant and powerful body of men. Better, my Lord Duke, see him; listen to what he has to say; if possible, secure him on your side in the struggle that is now going fiercely against your Highness. His joining your standard would crush your enemies at once.'

" Filippo Maria paused, thought a moment, and then said—

" 'I was hasty. You are right; and your advice, Rinaldo, is good. I will receive these strange visitors in the Chamber of Audience in less than half an hour. Let our conference be strictly private.'

“ All historians allow that Filippo Maria was gifted with consummate political sagacity. He clearly saw all the splendid opportunities which the convulsed state of Italy offered to his ambition; and all he seemed to want was the strong arm of a soldier of Fortune, like Sforza, on his side. He therefore determined to play a cautious and wily game with the young, but most brilliant leader of Condottieri then existing. As to the Count De Ricci, once his most attached friend and supporter; with him he had a different game to play. The old Lord, he knew, had no ambition, but great wealth, and was possessed of some secrets, relating to his early career, that would be better buried in oblivion; and it is very probable, had not Sforza released him from captivity, he had ended his days a prisoner at Pizzighitone.

“ Francesco Sforza entered the saloon where the Duke sat waiting his arrival, with a stately and firm step. The Duke of Milan

was no Sovereign of his: he considered himself, since the decision of the Pope, an independent Prince. He, therefore, neither bent his knee, nor offered any other token of respect to Filippo Maria, than to his equal in rank. With the Count De Ricci, who entered the saloon with Sforza, the case was different. He acknowledged the Duke as his Sovereign Prince, and treated him as such. No one of the Duke's household was present, except the Marchese Rinaldo.

“ ‘My Lord Duke,’ said Francesco Sforza in a firm, clear voice, ‘I have requested an audience of your Highness as an envoy of Venice, in the first place, and for personal reasons, in the second.’

“ ‘As an envoy of Venice, my Lord,’ said the Duke, interrupting him, ‘we will give you an audience in due form to-morrow; for I knew not you visited my Court in such a capacity. But whatever personal reasons you

may have for requesting this interview, I will now willingly hear them.'

" 'Well, then, my Lord Duke,' rejoined Sforza, 'I will state them. The last time I visited the dominions of your Highness, my life was attempted by assassins. I was visiting an old comrade, and was forced to seek safety on an island in Lago Maggiore, where I was pursued; and, my weapon breaking, I was run through the body and left for dead upon the beach. And, certainly, but for the generous assistance of the Count De Ricci's daughter, who prevented the assassins from making quite sure of their work, I should have been slain. As it was, to her care of my wound, I owe my life.'

" 'Well, my Lord,' hastily interrupted the Duke, his features betraying considerable agitation, while Francesco Sforza spoke,— 'well, what have I to do with that affair? Do you know who the assassins were? If

so, point them out, and they shall meet the doom they merit.'

" 'No, my Lord Duke,' returned Sforza calmly, and fixing his gaze upon the ruler of Milan, 'I do not know who the assassins were. Of them, or their attempt, I care little. Nay, I owe them much; and readily forgive them the sufferings they caused me for the blessings their villainy bestowed upon me. To the Count De Ricci's daughter I owe my life. I have devoted mine to her; and, with her father's full consent—'

" A strange, mocking smile passed over the features of the Duke, as, raising his head, he said—

" 'Stop, my Lord; one word to this Count De Ricci before you utter another syllable.' Sforza's cheek flushed, and he turned and looked anxiously into the stern, unmoved features of the old Count. 'Count De Ricci,' pursued the Duke, fixing his dark eyes, with a bitter expression in their glance, on his

subject, 'you have deceived me. You have deprived me for years of a daughter's love. You stated she died; whereas your own and only child, also named Bianca perished—not Bianca Visconti. What say you to this accusation, Count De Ricci ?'

" 'I say, your Highness,' returned the old Count, 'that you would not make this assertion without a good foundation. As you carried off old Dame Gertrude, I suppose you gained the knowledge you possess from her.'

" 'The torture wrung it from her, my Lord,' returned the Duke fiercely. 'There was no mistaking the striking likeness the girl bore to her mother. Suspicion being once roused, I sought for confirmation of my thoughts. And now, Count, what punishment think you a man deserves who dared to act as you have done? What motive had you in thus robbing the father of his child ?'

" The old warrior remained quite unmoved: he showed no symptoms of fear at the Duke's

fierce looks or words, but replied with perfect calmness, while Sforza stood, with folded arms, gazing in intense anxiety from one to the other, and waiting the result of a most unexpected discovery.

“ ‘My Lord Duke,’ said the Count, ‘I never intended to rob you of your child, for I acknowledge her to be your daughter. You may remember when the pestilence raged in Lombardy, and your Grace’s child and mine were seized with it, you sent your own physician to administer to their fearful distemper. He was a timid man, and when he beheld half my household dead from the plague, and the two poor children senseless and livid as the dead, he said—There is nothing more to be done here—they are dead. And he left in haste, carrying the pest with him, of which he perished. Alas! my child died that night. But my Countess, who loved the children as her life, insisted there were signs of life in Bianca Visconti, and devoted herself day and night to her recovery. The physician informed your

Highness that your child was dead. My wife restored her to life, and sacrificed her own in doing so. I resolved then to keep the girl as my own, and leave her all my possessions. As she grew in years, I loved her as my own; and I considered her destiny might be much happier, as the acknowledged daughter of the Count de Ricci than even as Bianca Visconti. But your Highness having no children, and Bianca bestowing her troth upon the Count Francesco Sforza, whose life she saved—and he plighting his in return—altered my mind on the subject. I informed Sforza whose child Bianca was, and he at once resolved to come here without waiting for his credentials as a Venetian envoy, and lay his proposals before your Highness, trusting, when you heard them, that you would accept him for a son-in-law.'

" 'What!' exclaimed the Duke, with a low laugh of scorn; "bestow the daughter of a Visconti upon the son of a peasant, even

though he be Lord of Ancona, and Count and Suzerain of some important fiefs in the kingdom of Naples.'

" 'Take care, my Lord Duke,' interrupted Sforza, with a fierce look at the ruler of Milan, ' that the peasant's son—'

" ' Nay, nay, Francesco Sforza,' hastily interrupted the old Count de Ricci, laying his hand upon the extended and powerful arm of the Condottieri leader; ' Nay, nay; keep your temper; my Lord Duke will hear what you have to propose before he destroys his daughter's happiness, and turns a willing follower into a bitter enemy.'

" While the old Count spoke, Rinaldo, Marchese de Bracciolini, whispered some few words in the ear of the Duke, who for a moment giving way to his gloomy and passionate temper, was on the point of crushing his own political designs. Mastering his temper, he turned to Sforza, saying—

" ' You expect to receive the hand of Bianca

Visconti. What do you propose to do to gain so great a prize?

“ ‘Relieve you, my Lord Duke,’ said Sforza, boldly, ‘from the persecution you are now enduring from your own generals. Abandon the siege of Martagnano, and I will engage to conclude a peace with all the opposing states, advantageous to your Highness, and thus conclude the war. Moreover, from this time forth, I will enter your Grace’s service with all the forces I command.’

“ ‘If,’ said the Duke eagerly, you undertake to conclude a peace advantageous to my dukedom, and do so at once, I, on my part, will agree to give you my daughter Bianca, and for her dowry, Cremona and its territory.* As to you, Count de Ricci, I pardon you, leaving you your territories; stipulating, however, that you bequeath them, as you have no successor, to her you so long considered your daughter.’

* Historical fact.

“Francesco Sforza stepped forward, and, bending his knee, with delight beaming on his handsome features, kissed the Duke’s hand, doing him homage as his lord and sovereign.

“Thus Francesco Sforza gained the first step to the throne he was so shortly destined to mount. So successfully did he manage his negotiations, that a treaty of peace was eagerly signed by all the belligerents, who were heartily sick of the war. On the restoration of tranquillity, he received the hand of the happy Bianca Visconti, who not only brought him youth, beauty, and amiability, but the rich dowry of Cremona and its territories.

“The future history of this most successful Condottieri leader is too well known for me to touch upon. Suffice it to say, that on the death of Filippo-Maria, he forced the Milanese to open their gates to him, and finally, to select him as their duke and ruler. Thus the son of the peasant of Castignola won a crown for his descendants.

“At the death of the old Count de Ricci, who continued to reside at his castle near Baveno, his possessions passed into the hands of Duke Sforza; who, to commemorate his happy meeting with his beloved Bianca, built a splendid palace on the Island of Fishers—where he often retired to spend a few weeks in the Summer months. The old tower was dear to them both; for there their loves commenced. A painting, commemorating the event, representing Sforza’s attempted assassination, and Bianca hastening to his rescue, was painted by the great Leonardo da Vinci. This picture, the Count de Ricci informed us, was preserved by his ancestors till, in a sudden popular commotion, the palace built by Duke Sforza was burned to the ground. The tower we first sheltered in on the island, still stands—though much dilapidated, and is, as I mentioned, known as Sforza’s Tower.”

“Thus, my dear sir,” said Aleen to Mr. Fitzpatrick, “ends my legend; which, like

your own, is founded, no doubt, on some historical facts. It, however, induced me to read certain chronicles of the renowned Duke Sforza; whom, all historians agree in making a famous captain and knight—though some, indeed, say he gained his crown by an act of perfidy."

"My dear Miss Atherstone," returned Mr. Fitzpatrick, "I am so charmed with your legend, though it has no fairies in it, that I will take the first opportunity of looking into a history of that period of Italian annals, which I know is full of most romantic facts. But yonder is the termination of our voyage," continued Mr. Fitzpatrick. "There is Bally Castle. I trust, my dear ladies, you will like it, and the scenery surrounding it."

"A more lovely spot cannot be," said Mrs. Atherstone and her daughter, with real pleasure beaming in the bright eyes of Aleen. "But what is the name of that stupendous mountain to the left?"

"That, said Mr. Fitzpatrick is The Keeper ; and that to the right is Inchigum. The first is nearly 3,400 feet high. Amid those hills, is the celebrated Devil's Bite—a great gap said to be made by his Satanic Majesty mistaking the ridge of the mountain for a fat pig !"

Aleen laughed ; and just then the barge shot up to a quay, on which stood a handsome boat-house. Several attendants were ready to assist.

Here we must leave our heroine for a time ; and, in our next chapter, visit England.

CHAPTER XII.

IN a richly-furnished chamber, in a large and handsome house—whose gardens, in the rear, extended to the edge of the river Thames, though situated in the heart of London—sat Mr. O'Grady and his son, William Granville O'Grady.

The banks of the river Thames in Queen Anne's reign, and in that of George the First, were not so thickly built over with vast warehouses as at present. Many mansions, in the

vicinity of the Strand, possessed handsome gardens, extending to the water's edge. The house inhabited by Mr. O'Grady belonged to a rich grocer and soap-boiler, and was let to Mr. O'Grady, at a high rent for that period.

It was past ten o'clock, and supper had just been removed. Several decanters and flasks of wine and spirits were placed upon the table. It was an age when all men, high and low, drank hard.

The month was March, and a remarkably cold March it was—even for England. A wood fire, placed, after the fashion of France, on two iron supporters, with handsome casts of a dragon's body at their extremities, blazed cheerfully. Mr. O'Grady and his son evidently expected guests that night, for both were dressed with care, and in all the elaborate ugliness of the times.

Father and son were conversing earnestly; and their countenances were somewhat flushed,

as if they had been making free with the juice of the grape before the supper was removed.

“ You are sure, William,” said the father, “ that the Duke left this morning.”

“ Positive,” returned the son.

“ It looks, then, as if this intelligence from France is not to be doubted,” returned Mr. O’Grady.

“ You may be satisfied. My informant is not to be doubted,” replied the son. “ He saw the fleet lying to off Mardyke; and, during the late severe gale, Sir John Leake and Lord Dursley, were forced to abandon the blockade; without a doubt, the Chevalier St. George has at once set sail for Scotland.”

“ This will be cheering news for our guests to-night,” said Mr. O’Grady.

“ By the mass, father,” returned the son, with a forced laugh, “ I think you and your Jacobite friends are working hard in a losing cause. I wish to heaven you would give up this bootless enterprize. This Chevalier St.

George will never gain the crown he aims at. We could accomplish our ends without risking our necks to the halter, or our heads to the block. You have been, half your life, lopping at the branches, when you could have put your axe to the roots."

Mr. O'Grady looked angrily at his son as he replied—

“It is you, William, that has wavered—not me. And you now give me sorry thanks for the years I have laboured to raise you to rank and fortune. I should have succeeded from the very outset, had not that stumbling-block to our path been born afterwards. If the rascals had fired the mansion, none of these obstacles that have now occurred could have arisen.”

The son gazed at his father with a strange expression of disgust on his handsome features, as if he loathed the idea. His sire did not look up; but the son said—

“I must confess I somehow do not like this wholesale way of proceeding. It is certainly

too bad to have this fine property—which was once in our possession, and to which I really feel I have a right—snatched from us without a struggle to get it back. Still, I do not feel quite inclined to proceed to the extremity you propose. Now with respect to this offer of Ulick O'Connor's, depend on it, it is now at an end. Sir William O'Grady, the possessor of the estates and the William O'Grady existing at present, are two very distinct personages. Ulick O'Connor has embarked with the Chevalier St. George, and will land in Scotland in his train. It's all a mad scheme."

"I know very well, William," returned Mr. O'Grady moodily, "that you care little about the success of the Jacobite cause; but I can tell you, if this expedition prospers—and I see every reason that it should—it will raise us to wealth and rank. The confiscated property of the Fitzmaurices would come to you."

"Well, I hope it may, father," rejoined the son; "but, nevertheless, I feel very satisfied that

I can still command The Warhawk. She made a splendid voyage the other day in her schooner-rig ; and I have a scheme in my head with respect to this damsel, Aleen O'Connor, as Ulick persists in calling her. I will make sure of her, willing, or unwilling. She's a splendid girl ; and her fortune will be princely. Ha ! here come some of your Jacobite friends. Take care, father, take care ! These Hanover rats have a keen scent. I'm off to-morrow."

As he spoke, four gentlemen entered the room. But as we have nothing to do with the conspiracy then on foot to overthrow George the First's throne, or with any of the conspirators, save Ulick O'Connor and Mr. O'Grady, we will pass over the conference between them, which occupied most part of the night ; and merely say, that by twelve o'clock next day, not one of the party remained in London.

We must here relate the events that led to the connection of the O'Grady family with the Granvilles and Fitzmaurices. At the period of

Oliver Cromwell's cruel oppression and brutal outrages upon the unfortunate Irish chieftains who opposed his arms in Ireland, the O'Gradys were a numerous and influential family. Like many others, however, they were crushed and impoverished, and some years before the opening of our story, only two orphan brothers survived of the Kerry O'Gradys. Without home, property, or influential kindred, the two boys were reared in a wild and neglected state, in a poor county town in Kerry, by a very distant kinsman on the mother's side. The eldest was about thirteen at his father's death, the youngest eleven.

The eldest was a remarkably handsome boy; but, from his very earliest years, manifested a wild and vicious nature. The youngest appeared of a timid, vacillating character and disposition. Their education was sadly neglected; for their protector, himself a bachelor, was so reduced in character and circumstances, as to subsist entirely by a secret connection with a

then notorious gang of smugglers. At fourteen years of age, William O'Grady, the elder, sailed in a smuggling lugger for the Coast of Spain. On the vessel's departure from that country, the boy, by some mischance, was left behind; and being of a roving, reckless disposition, he joined a band of Zingaries and roamed through Spain for nearly two years. He next joined a troop of insurgents, and being taken prisoner, would have been shot, had not his youth and handsome figure attracted the attention of Don Jose Maldonados, the officer who routed the insurgents and took O'Grady prisoner. Don Jose listened to William O'Grady's account of himself with great surprise; for he represented himself to be a member of a noble Irish family driven from his country by the heretical English. He added that he had escaped to Spain in a vessel bound there, and that, to avoid starvation, he had been induced to join the insurgents, of whose intentions he was ignorant.

Don Jose took him under his protection; and, naturally daring and clever, he soon induced his patron to give him a commission in his own regiment. In three years, he rose to the rank of captain, and acquired a tolerable knowledge of military tactics, and a double proportion of vice and profligacy. On the death of Don Jose, who was killed in battle, William O'Grady left the regiment, and proceeded to Seville, having a good sum of money left him by his really generous protector. Being a determined gambler, he soon entered into the dissipated society of that city; but getting into scrapes, he resolved to go and try his fortune in his own country. In the tall, deeply-embrowned and soldier-like looking man, no one was likely to recognize the wild and reckless boy, who, eight years previously had sailed from his native land with a gang of smugglers.

Assuming another name as soon as he landed at the Cove of Cork, he proceeded into Kerry, and

then to the little town of Skibbereen, where he had left his brother with his mother's kinsman. As he justly conjectured, no one recognized him ; so, taking up his abode in the little inn, he made cautious enquiries concerning his brother, and the distant relative with whom he had been left. The latter, he learned, was dead. His brother, five years back, had gone in a small smack to Bristol, and no one had heard anything of him from that time.

The troubled and lawless state of Ireland at this period offered to William O'Grady a wide field to try his fortunes in. Various causes led to his intimacy with the turbulent Ulick O'Connor, and he joined him in his wild projects of exterminating the English settlers. Under the name of Fenwick, William O'Grady joined several of the secret societies then existing against the government. At the same time, he openly assumed the title of an officer in the Spanish army ; and, in Cork, frequented the best society. His handsome person, and

insinuating manners, won the affection of Sir Vrance Granville's daughter ; and finally, he, in an evil hour, induced her to fly with him ; for, as to gaining her father's consent, he knew that was utterly impossible. Fortunately for her, she died in giving birth to a son ; and William O'Grady, knowing how hopeless any endeavour would be to bring about a reconciliation with the Granville family, returned to Ireland, and again joined Ulick O'Connor, then outlawed. Under the name of Fenwick, O'Grady became the leader of a notorious band of desperadoes, who committed the most frightful excesses in the counties of Cork and Kerry, the remote districts of which latter were the favorite retreats of Fenwick and his associates.

It happened that, during a gale, a Dutch galliot was driven on the rocks near Dunkestore ; and, her unfortunate crew being drowned, she beat over the rocks, and stranded on the beach. Some of Fenwick's men took

possession of her. It was, at this period, he planned his attack upon Castle Granville. Ulick O'Connor was not at all aware of the private schemes and projects of his daring and reckless associate, as he was shortly after forced to fly the country. Fenwick, amongst his followers, possessed one, named Dennis Mahony, who was perfectly devoted to him: it was this man who married Brady Sullivan, a scheming, artful, and clever woman. She returned, as a spy, to Castle Granville, and contrived to get the nursing, as already mentioned, of the young Cuthbert Fitzmaurice. Thus O'Grady, or Fenwick, as he styled himself, became acquainted with all the proceedings of the families of Granville and Fitzmaurice.

Besides the project of making his son the next heir to the Granville property, O'Grady nourished an intense hatred to the old Baronet, Sir Vrance Granville. After much thought and change of projects, he, at last, planned the expedition against Castle Granville. The Dutch

galliote was repaired ; and, embarking with sixty of his most reckless associates, eager for the plunder of Castle Granville, they succeeded, as our readers are aware, in their diabolical and murderous attack. Brady Sullivan, as she was called, carried off young Cuthbert Fitzmaurice, and, with him, was taken on board the Dutch galliote.

But O'Grady himself, and a few followers, in their hurry and confusion, and the extreme darkness of the night, missed the boats. The alarm having reached the peasantry in the vicinity, he was forced to cross the country, and hide himself in one of his retreats for several weeks, cursing the stupidity of his followers for not setting fire to the Castle. In the meantime, those who succeeded in regaining the galliote got under weigh ; but the violent gale that blew that night, and the intoxication of the whole crew, rendered their voyage back to the creeks in the vicinity of Cape Clear one of peril and difficulty. In a

few hours, after getting under weigh, the vessel struck upon one of the numerous reefs off the coast; and, in the confusion and dismay, several of the crew lost their lives. Mahony, however, contrived to save his wife's life, without bestowing a thought upon the unfortunate child, who was left to perish; and when, next morning, not a vestige of the Dutch galliote was to be seen, she was supposed to have beat over the reef, and gone down in deep water.

But Providence ordered it otherwise. With the rise of the tide, the Dutch sloop beat over the reef; and, a strong gale, springing up from the land, drove her out to sea, leaky, dismasted, and much shattered; yet able to keep the sea for four-and-twenty hours. She was then boarded, as related, by old Jack Morris, and the young Cuthbert Fitzmaurice was saved.

When William O'Grady heard that the Galliote perished, and the child with it, he felt

exceedingly pleased. The heir was thus removed, and further plotting was unnecessary. Some time after this, the desperate bands of different denominations that infested the South of Ireland, were put down by the vigorous measures of government. Every effort was made to secure the person of Fenwick, but he evaded all pursuit. O'Connor was in France, in the French service, and, shortly after, O'Grady contrived to escape over to Portugal with his son.

After some years spent there, allowing time for the name of Fenwick to be forgotten, he began to think of returning to Ireland to renew his project against the Granville family. Having heard that the Fitzmaurice estates were confiscated, and meeting some of his old associates in Lisbon—then engaged in the contraband trade, he joined them in building a smuggling lugger of a superior class and description. At this period he possessed a con-

siderable sum of money—gained by great success in gambling transactions.

On arriving in Ireland, having disguised his person as much as possible, he took up his abode in a house adjoining the old tower of Kilgobbin, on the Bandon river. There, with the assistance of his old allies, Brady Mahony and her husband, he planned the introduction of his son William to Sir Hugh Granville, as the lost Cuthbert Fitzmaurice. The impatient and wild temper of his son, who detested the constraint he suffered during his abode at Castle Granville, and the suspicions entertained by Dennis O'Regan, concerning the false Cuthbert, induced him to abandon that plan.

Still, no failure or disappointment could discourage him from persevering and following up his determination of succeeding, by some means or other. No matter at what risk, he would persist till his son William inherited the property he considered him entitled to.

He had the most accurate information of everything that occurred at Castle Granville. When Sir Hugh returned from India, William O'Grady still continued to keep up the deception, till, by listening at the door to the communication made by O'Regan to the Baronet, he learned that he was discovered; and, not choosing to face the Baronet, the son fled to the father.

This unexpected denouement enraged and puzzled the elder O'Grady; for a time he was uncertain how to act. Still there was no necessity for flight; for, though Cuthbert was suspected as an impostor, O'Grady himself was still totally free from discovery. Some short time after this, Mr. O'Grady, disguised, was in Cork; and, passing the door of an hotel, he was struck with astonishment on beholding a person enter the house, whom he never expected to see again in this world. Observing a waiter speak to the stranger as he passed

in, O'Grady inquired the name of the gentleman.

"That gentleman in black, in the spectacles?" inquired the waiter.

"Yes," returned O'Grady, anxiously."

"Oh, sir, that was Mr. Gardener. He is Sir Hugh Granville's private secretary.

"Ha, I thought so," said Mr. O'Grady, joyfully. "I knew him at once." And giving the waiter a couple of pieces of silver, he added — "Mr. Gardener is a very old friend of mine. Show me into his room."

"Certainly, sir," said the waiter. "This way."

The next moment he threw open a door, and Mr. O'Grady entered the room, and beheld the stranger seated at a table, writing a letter. The Baronet's secretary raised his eyes from the paper, and looked into the great whiskered and moustachioed face of Mr. O'Grady, simply saying —

“Pray, sir, to what do I owe the pleasure of your company?”

The waiter having retired and closed the door. Mr. O’Grady advanced close to the table, and passing his hand across his face, he removed his moustachios, saying—

“Is it possible, Terence O’Grady, you forget your only brother?”

Mr. Gardener fell back in his chair, pale as death at the word Terence. But when the sentence was finished, as if relieved from a great weight, he sprang on his feet, and embraced his brother with a real feeling of affection and astonishment.

“Good God, William!” exclaimed he, “I did not know you in the least.”

“Ah, I am not surprised at that, Terence,” returned Mr. O’Grady, coolly restoring to his lip his false moustachios, and sitting down beside his brother.

“You were very young when we parted; but I could not mistake *you*. So you are

actually secretary to Sir Hugh Granville—the very man who, by a special and Royal grant, has robbed my son of his undoubted rights."

Mr. Gardener, as we shall continue to call him, to avoid confusion of names, looked at his brother with a most perplexed gaze. But Mr. O'Grady's head was full of the most extraordinary wild schemes. Strange that this man should prefer, in pursuit of his views, to traverse so crime-stained a path, when he must have known in his heart, that had he candidly and openly declared that the false Cuthbert was Sir Hugh's own lawful nephew—the only child of his eldest sister—the generous and upright Baronet would unquestionably have settled a handsome inheritance upon the young man. No; the heart and soul of O'Grady was essentially bad and vicious. He would grasp at the whole, and steep his soul in guilt to gain his perverted ends.

Thus, then, after years of separation, the brothers met; and it now became Mr. O'Grady's object to contrive that his brother's

situation in the family of Sir Hugh should be of infinite benefit to himself and his plans.

We have said that, when a child, Terence O'Grady was of an extremely weak and changeable nature. He was easily led ; and, in consequence of his neglected childhood, he had, from his earliest years, witnessed every kind of profligacy and trickery, defiance of the laws, and savage propensities. At this period of his life, under proper guidance, he might, probably, have turned out an honest man ; but, becoming familiar with so much depravity, his inclination led him to follow an evil course. To get rid of such a youth, his relative, finding he made no scruple of deceiving him, sent him to Bristol to an Irish store-dealer there, that he might learn a trade. Terence thus acquired a tolerable knowledge of book-keeping, and then became a clerk in a merchant's counting-house. Being naturally docile, he progressed rapidly, but soon got into bad company ; and, being detected, or

suspected, of committing some frauds against his employers, was dismissed. He then proceeded to London, and being really an excellent accountant, and writing a beautiful hand, he soon procured a situation; for his exterior was good, and his countenance rather handsome than otherwise. In a few years, he worked himself into a very lucrative establishment, and might have realised a handsome independence but for his love of pleasure and evil company.

In a fatal hour he married a most unprincipled woman—handsome and extravagant. She induced him to commit a forgery for a large sum, with the greater part of which she decamped with an abandoned associate. Exasperated and maddened at this desertion, and dreading discovery, as the time approached when the forged document would be presented to his employers, Terence O'Grady fled; and, going to Liverpool, managed to

get a passage in a fine ship bound for Calcutta, determined to turn over a new leaf, and shun evil company.

On board this ship was a gentleman going out to India to fill a lucrative situation under the Government. During the passage, his secretary died of a fever. With a little management, and having an extremely good address, Terence O'Grady, under the name of Gardener, offered his services for the time to the gentleman, whose name was Hamilton, and who was, eventually, so much pleased with his new secretary's writing and unassuming manner during the voyage, that, on arriving at Calcutta, he offered to continue him in the situation he had temporarily filled. This offer Mr. Gardener gladly accepted, and vowed he would honestly fulfil his duties. And he did so for three or four years, when unfortunately he lost his kind patron.

Just at this period, Sir Hugh Granville arrived at Madras; and the Baronet making

inquiries for a secretary to put together some intricate papers, Mr. Gardener applied and was engaged. Sir Hugh Granville, like Mr. Hamilton, was so highly pleased with his services, that he offered to retain him with a handsome salary and a pension at his death, if he would accompany him to Europe. To this Mr. Gardener gladly acceded, for the climate was beginning to destroy his constitution. In the lapse of years in Ireland, and under another name, he had no fear of being discovered, and therefore sailed for Europe with Sir Hugh. Terence was amazed when he learned from his brother his history ; and that his nephew, William O'Grady, was actually the next heir to the great Granville estates, provided Sir Hugh died without a will.

After this first meeting, the brothers frequently had conferences. But it is needless to repeat all the arguments used by William O'Grady to induce his brother to enter into his

plans to secure to his son the inheritance of the Granvilles. Hitherto, Terence had kept his word: he had acted fairly and honestly to his two last patrons; and it required considerable time, and most plausible arguments, to gain him over to his brother's views. Having seen the certificates of marriage and the birth of his brother's child, Terence considered his nephew lawfully entitled to the Granville estates—though he knew they might be willed away from him. Everything, therefore, depended on the suppression of a will. Besides, in the event of success, he, Terence, was to receive a thousand a-year during his life. This, certainly, had some weight with him in his determination to help his brother. Sir Vrance Granville was the first baronet created in Ireland. His son, Sir Hugh, for his services abroad—and having no heirs of his own body—obtained the power from the Crown of willing his title, and his family estates, to his nephew,

Gerald. The object, then, was to secure the will. Terence was aware that Sir Hugh had made one in favor of his beloved, and, as he supposed, only nephew.

This would have been scarcely possible had not the Baronet—on his return to Castle Granville, with his secretary, to make some arrangements with respect to property—been employed at the very time of his death in arranging some valuable papers in a singularly constructed cabinet, secured by a most ingenious lock—incapable of being imitated or forced. Sir Hugh, that fatal morning, had unlocked his cabinet. Mr. Gardener was sitting at the table, marking and taking memoranda when a low moan, from the Baronet, fell upon his ear. He turned hastily round; and, at that identical moment, the Baronet fell upon the floor, struck with apoplexy. The first impulse of Terence O'Grady was to give the alarm. His hand was on the bell: he paused. Deadly pale, with anxiety and terror, he gazed alternately upon

the senseless Baronet and the open cabinet. The study was in a remote wing of the castle; the cabinet was let into the wall, and the lid was of brass. It stood wide open, and a single glance shewed him the will. Stooping, he lifted the head of his generous patron, and he felt his pulse. It had ceased. He laid his hand on his heart: it was silent. The noble and upright Sir Hugh Granville was dead.

Terence O'Grady stepped to the cabinet, and seized, with a somewhat trembling hand, the important will. Placing it in a secure spot, apart from the library, for it was too large to conceal about his person. He then locked the cabinet; took Sir Hugh's bunch of keys; opened a private desk, and placed the key of the cabinet therein; and then returned the keys to the Baronet's pocket. He now rang the bell with violence, rushing at the same time from the library, and shouting loudly for assistance.

The deed was done. Mr. Briefless was sum-

moned ; but Mr. Gardener escaped all suspicion. There could appear no possible motive to allow even a thought of wrong to rest on Mr. Gardener ; for Mr. Briefless knew that in the will the secretary was left two hundred pounds a-year for life ; and the loss of the will deprived him of that legacy. Not, indeed, that Mr. Briefless, even for an instant, mixed up Mr. Gardener's name with the loss of the will ; though the worthy lawyer could not be convinced but that the will had, in some manner or other, been made away with.

After Sir Hugh's death, Mr. Gardener, having received much kindness from Mr. Briefless, and a promise that his intended legacy would yet be made good by Gerald Granville, said he would, for the benefit of his health, cross the Channel, and reside, for a time, in Devonshire.

From motives of his own, Terence deceived his brother William by declaring he had burnt Sir Hugh's will—while he retained it in his

own possession. It was shortly after this that he underwent his first attack of epilepsy. He had been, from childhood, of a feeble constitution ; his mind was never very strong, and he was always prone to superstition. Being now fearfully shattered, his past life rose before him in terrible distinctness ; and the fearful convulsions he underwent during his attack, left him weak and broken in mind and body. Two succeeding attacks so completely altered him in feature, that even his brother would have doubted his identity. Horrid dreams haunted him at night : prostration of mind perplexed him during the day ; and nervous anxiety and fear of the coming of darkness, made life a perfect misery.

Conscience, at length, so worked upon him, that, getting a longer interval of ease, and firmly believing that the fearful disease he laboured under, was a judgment of God, he determined to undo, as far as lay in his power, the evil he had committed. Therefore, taking

Sir Hugh's will with him, he reached Cork, and, as the reader already knows, was stricken dead in the very act of restitution.

We have been as brief as possible in winding up and elucidating those events of the story which may appear in any way mysterious ; and shall now follow the details of our narrative to the end without being arrested in our course by retrograde movements.

CHAPTER XIV.

To the westward of the Islands of Cape Clear, lie several most extraordinary deep inlets of the sea, running several miles in various directions into the interior of a very wild, and, at the period of our tale, very deserted, ill-cultivated country, scattered over with a poor and somewhat lawless race of inhabitants. All this country now wears a very different aspect; populous villages and towns are seen where not a hut existed in the reigns of Queen Anne and George the First. Many a goodly cutter and

schooner sail from those creeks for various parts of the United Kingdom ; while in Anne's reign their sole living occupants were enormous flocks of wild fowl, and an occasional smuggling craft and its crew, hiding behind the numerous islands, which, to a casual observer, block up their mouths. Some of these creeks can boast of much natural beauty of scenery ; others are bare banks of mud. Some are stern and grand, from the precipices and masses of huge rocks that hem in their silent and tranquil waters.

One bright morning in the early part of September, the sun had just raised its head from its ocean bed, and its rays fell over the still waters of a most romantic creek, about six miles to the westward of Cape Clear. This creek was not half a mile broad in any part ; but the water was singularly deep, and the cliffs high and perpendicular. Not a breath of wind fell upon the water ; for several bold and singularly-shaped islands shut up the entrance

from the sea ; so that the space within looked like a circular lake excluded from all communication with the outward world. In the middle of this water lay a long, low, graceful craft, with its tall tapering spars towering high above the bank, and with scarcely to the eye a shroud to support them. This vessel was The Warhawk, then the sole property of William O'Grady. During the short period that he enjoyed the rank and wealth of the Granville family, he had purchased all the shares of the several owners of this celebrated smuggling lugger, which, as yet, had defied all attempts either to capture, or condemn her. He then used her as his yacht.

Though she had never been caught with a contraband article on board, she was notoriously known as the most successful smuggling lugger that ever ran a cargo to the coast of Ireland. William O'Grady did not join in any of the political schemes of his plotting father : he had

no taste for them whatever; and, with more foresight than his designing sire, during the short period of his prosperity he put aside some large sums, in case of an emergency. When deprived of his ill-gotten title and estates, William O'Gradys consoled himself with the reflection that he still possessed The Warhawk and several thousand pounds; and once more he gathered about him many of his old associates, determined, if he failed in the projects he then had in view, that The Warhawk should return to her old trade.

On the morning indicated at the opening of this chapter, the lugger was lying at single anchor in the pool, at the back of Clare Island. As soon as her sun's rays fell upon the flush deck, the crew, which then consisted of only fourteen seamen, were roused from their slumbers, and all on board became actively engaged in getting under weigh. In the midst of the bustle, William O'Gradys came upon deck. The

anchor was up ; but no sails were hoisted, and the tide was at the full, without motion either way.

“ You must sweep her out, Mahony,” said William O’Grady to his old follower, who is known to our readers as Brady Sullivan’s husband, and the *ci-devant* Phelim O’Toole.

“ We shall have a breeze,” said Dennis Mahony, “ after we pass Enniskerkin Island. The tide is on the turn, and anything will set her out through the gut.”

Accordingly, four immense sweeps were run out ; and, the ebb-making, The Warhawk, with great ease, was kept moving through the narrow channel between the three Islands that blocked up the mouth of this singular creek.

“ Did Tendersink’s sloop get into Baltimore last night ?” demanded William O’Grady of Mahony, who was steering the lugger.

“ Faix, the Dutchman did it well,” replied Mahony. “ He got part of his cargo safe stowed away in the caverns, and then sailed

into Baltimore with a cargo of stockfish, salt cod, and sour Dutch cheeses. He's a beauty, is Tendersink. I staid with him till late last night."

"Did he see," inquired William O'Grady, "anything of this fast brig—now on this coast, and commanded by the very same man that had the cutter, that chased us to the old head? Captain Morris—that's his name, is it not?"

"Faix, that's the man," answered Mahony; "he's a commander now, and the ten-gun brig he has is said to be the fastest ever seen on this coast. But, be gorra! we shall care little for her should she have a run after us."

"But did Tendersink see her?"

"No, sir, he didn't. He said she was at Bantry, or in Kenmare Bay. There's a nice breeze from the eastward, sir," continued Mahony, as the lugger shot out from the shelter of the island, and stood towards the large

one of Enniskerkin, some sunken rocks preventing her attempting to go through the other channel, which was much shorter.

“Well, get in the sweeps, and up with our fore-lug. If we get a good breeze from the eastward, we can reach our destination to-night,” said William O’Grady, taking the tiller himself.

The immense sheet of canvas forming the fore-lug was soon up, and filled with the rising breeze; and then the mizen. Rapidly threading her way through the intricacies of a really dangerous channel of sunken rocks, The Warhawk soon gained the open sea without the Island of Enniskerkin; and then hoisting her main-lug, stood away for the mizen head.

“She goes along, sir,” observed Mahony, “better than ever, since you shifted the fore-mast a foot.”

“I think she does, Dennis; but I have something to say to you about this Captain Morris, who commands this ten-gun brig. I

heard some strange tale of him in a club-room in London some months ago, about the time he received his rank of commander."

"Faix, I wanted myself to say something about him," returned Mahony; "but what did you hear, sir?"

"Why, I was one evening engaged at a card table in a club-room; and a gentleman standing by, said to another, in my hearing—'Oh, yes, that's the officer, who, when a lad, picked up the body of the unfortunate and gallant Admiral Sir Cloutesley Shovel, who was wrecked, you know, on the Scilly Islands.' 'Oh, I remember,' returned the other gentleman, who was a naval officer, and an old man, 'I was on board Parker's brig when she went to St. Mary's to bring the body away. That lad's history was curious enough. They told us he was picked up in a Dutch galliot off the Islands, quite a wreck; and all they could make out of the child was, that his name was Cuthbert.' When I heard that name," con-

tinued William O'Gradys, "coupled with that of a Dutch galliote, I was struck forcibly ; so much so, that I played a wrong card and lost my game, and a hundred guineas at the same time. While I was apologizing to my partner, the two gentlemen moved on, and I heard no more. But I remember my father and you speaking of a Dutch galliote, and that it was in such a craft that my cousin Cuthbert Fitz-maurice perished. Now, are you sure, Mahony, that that vessel you carried off the young boy in, *did* go down ?"

"Be gorra, sir, I begin to doubt it. We never saw more of her certainly ; but, by Jabers, after knocking her ribs for a couple of hours against the sunken rocks off Quince Island, it was only natural to suppose she made a hole in the water the moment she beat off the rocks—and yet she mightn't."

"No, I am sure she did not," said William O'Gradys ; "for afterwards I contrived to ask a question or two of old Captain Pocock, the

naval officer, I heard speaking in the club-room, and he gave me the year and date of the time he visited the Scilly Islands. The lad found in the Dutchman, was then about 14 years old. He also remembered the name of the Dutch vessel he was found in ; for the lad's courage, and dexterity, and seamanship, pleased old Captain Pocock, who has ever since interested himself about this Captain Morris."

"What was the name, Mister William?" asked Dennis Mahoney, anxiously. "It was a devil of a name—I could make nothing of it. But, be Gorra, if I heard it I'd remember it, in reason of your father's noticing it, and laughing at the attempts we made at it."

"Well, Captain Pocock, said the Galliot's name was, 'Hohengoleim.' "

"Oh, Musha, be gor, that's her!" exclaimed Dennis. "We called her the Old-hen-and-golame ; but we never made out where she hailed from ; for the crew were all drowned ; and the other name was the dicken's of a name

—as long as my arm, and as full of h's, and r's, and l's as would puzzle St. Patrick himself. What will be done, now, sir? Here's another chip of the same block; for as sure as I'm alive, this Captain Morris is your cousin, Cuthbert Fitzmaurice."

"It's no matter if he is," returned William O'Grady; "let him find his name out if he likes. Let me manage and succeed in my present project, and I do not care who holds the estates. But you said, Dennis, that you had something to relate about this Captain Morris. What is it?"

"Why, sir, I heard that the brig lay to some weeks ago, off Castle Townsend, and that Captain Morris went ashore, and visited Granville Castle, and was shown all over it. That, afterwards, he went to Innismoyle Abbey; and it was remarked by several of the household, that the Captain was wonderful like to Sir Geral Granville, your cousin. Now, be gorra, this looks mighty queer."

"Yes," rejoined William O'Grady, "it looks as if he had gained some clue or other to induce him to endeavour to trace his origin. Now should my cousin Gerald fall in the wars, which is not unlikely, this brother of his (and I am satisfied he is his brother), would be a sad stumbling-block to my father's schemes."

"Faix, your honour's father is likely, by all accounts, to bring his own head to the block, if he doesn't give up his political schemes, as he calls them. They say the Pretender was forced to slip his cable; and that the whole thing is knocked on the head."

"Where did you hear that, Dennis?" asked William O'Grady, anxiously.

Dennis Mahony looked up into his master's face with a hesitating expression on his own features. But after a moment, he said—

"There was a man from Mr. Comerford's come in last night before I left the Tower to come on board; and he said Miss Grace told him to tell you—to take care, for there were officers

all over the country, hunting out political offenders ; and that it was said your father's real name was known, and that he and you were suspected of being in the country."

As Dennis Mahony mentioned the name of Miss Grace, a deep flush spread over the face of William O'Grady. But the next instant a dark frown altered the entire expression of his countenance, as he almost savagely said—

"Why the devil didn't you mention this first?"

"Faix, first or last, Mister William, it can make no difference," returned Mahony, in a dogged kind of tone. "You tould me niver to mention Miss Grace's name again. So, faix, I didn't mind mentioning it at all, for the matter of that."

"Here, take the helm," said O'Grady, giving the tiller to Dennis, and pacing the long deck of the lugger in deep thought.

On sailed The Warhawk, smoothly and swiftly. The Mizen Head was passed ; and

then, hauling her wind, she held on her course with the breeze freshening. Dunmanus and Bantry Bays were passed; and, as the sun sank into the western wave, The Warhawk was running through the sound called the Blasques. When the shades of night fell over the deep, she ran into a cove under David's Head, and there let go her anchor, having run, from sunrise, a distance of one hundred and twenty-two miles.

END OF VOL. II.

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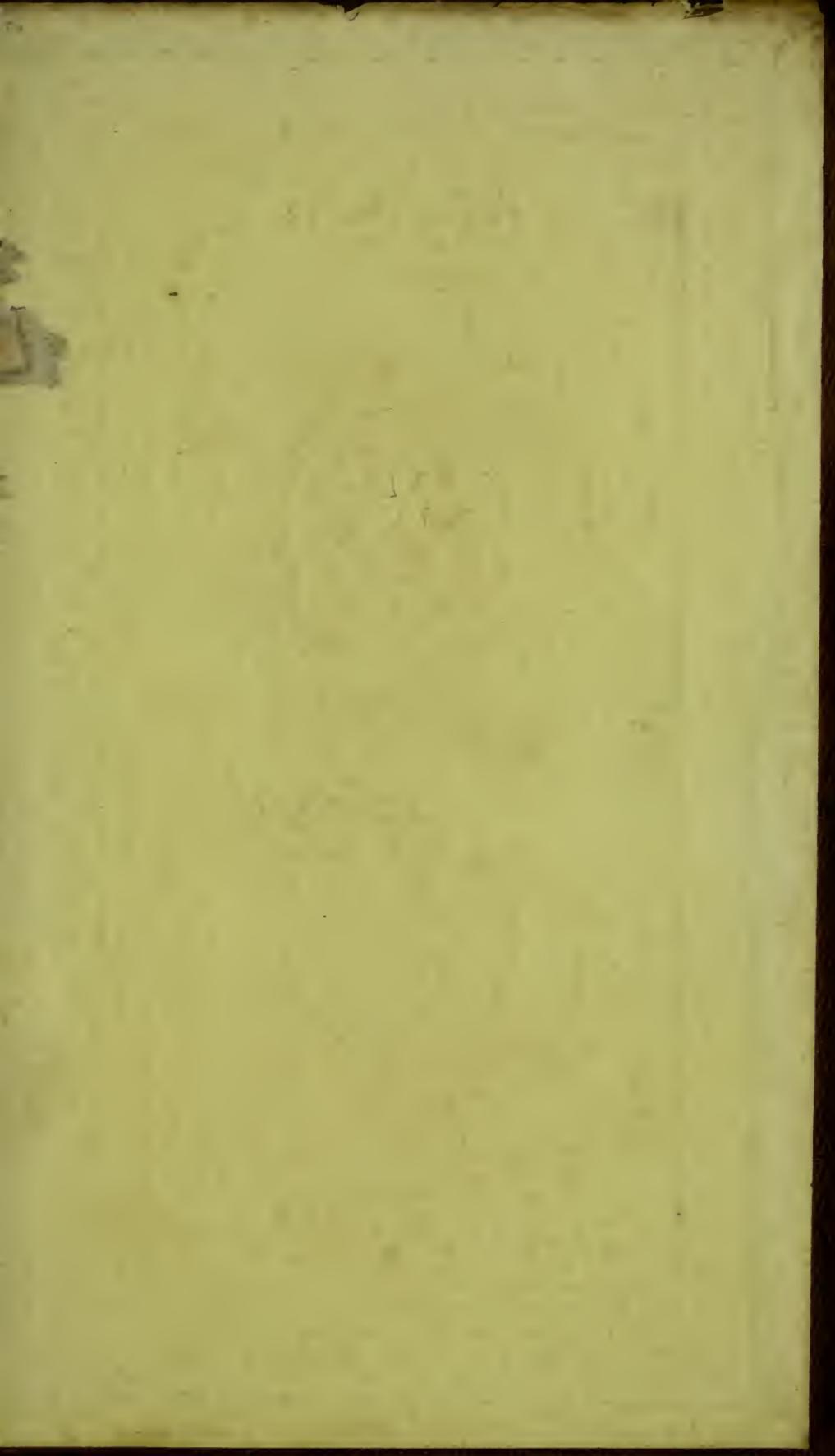
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